

**Indigenous and institutional thought in the practice of rural development:**  
a study of an Ushi chiefdom in Luapula, Zambia.

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### Abstract.

This thesis presents a critical analysis of rural, especially agricultural, development, viewed as social process. It considers how villagers and formal institutions understand economic activity, and how these differing perspectives inform patterns of practice.

First, given that development is nominally about the formulation and implementation of ideas, the possibility of using the concept discourse as originated by Foucault is explored: an approach which treats concept and practice as reciprocally constitutive.

The area first examined substantively is technical knowledge of agricultural production in Mabumba. I show how techniques can be conceptually differentiated between "traditional" village methods and institutional interventions. This is followed by an exegesis of village political economy, stressing how kinship provides the foundation for an economy strongly premised on distributive processes.

The third section examines the various formal institutions at work in the village, stressing a contrastive emphasis on the productive processes in themselves, particularly in relation to cash crop maize. Chapter nine then takes up the theme of productionism and distributionism as expressed in the political activities of the chief, to show how these different foci are arenas for the operation of power.

The final chapter reviews the evidence, concluding that intervention articulated through maize (productionism) very closely resembles a Foucauldian discourse. Ideas about how maize should be grown are beginning to inform a new subjectivity for the grower: the modern, developed farmer who applies quantitative standards to the evaluation of production and people. It is shown how the discourse approach complements a more traditional Marxist one: by specifying the embodied processes through which capital becomes effective, and allowing for an ideological element in the determination of how people think and act, without granting ideology unqualified hegemonic status. Discourse in relation to agricultural research is reconsidered, suggesting some new ways forward, mindful of the limitations which productionism imposes.



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## Chapter 1: Introduction

"The subject matter of agricultural and rural development could be described as lying at an intersection of the agronomic and the social or political with a third plane, namely, that of power, government and administration in the realm of bureaucracy, organisation and logistics."

(Apthorpe, 1984, p.139).

I begin with a substantive rationale for the research presented in this thesis. In a naive sense "development" appeals as a subject for the anthropologist: it is about the formulation of ideas and their application; the relation of notion and practice in the attempt to engineer changes in a society. It raises such issues as ideology, motivation, intentions, outcomes and reflections on outcomes.

Further, it has engendered a whole literature on the possible role of the anthropologist as an actor in applied social research, as means for sensitising the juggernauts of development (the World Bank, IMF, etc.) to the social realities of the objects of their interventions (e.g. Grillo and Rew, 1985).

But the tendency has been for anthropologists to produce "internalist" accounts of development, by which I mean interpretations of the effects of development at a grass roots (most often village) level, from a villager perspective. The bottom addressing the top. Such extreme localisation of analysis has not unexpectedly unnerved practitioners in the field of development (policy makers, local government officials, project staff) who find themselves left with no room for manoeuvre (nothing is generalisable for intervention), and untrusting of the anthropologist-as-mischief-maker.

In the case of rural Zambia (not to say much of the rest of village

Africa) there has been a paucity of accounts of "modern" institutions and their place in village life; or rather the accounts which exist are mostly in the sphere of political science which treats motivation and power in a far more universalist way than anthropologists find (a priori) acceptable. Institutions appear as vehicles which individuals use strategically to achieve individual ends; indeed most of these analyses have focused on the Party (UNIP) as key instrument in development, and have shown that certain outcomes not deducible from party rhetoric have to be seen in terms of the political ambitions of those seeking office (e.g. Bates, 1976, and Bratton, 1980).

Whilst both "traditional" village ethnographies and political-institutional analyses are valuable, they miss the point that there is a whole range of formal institutions which have an influence at village level, and indeed that most of these have representatives who live in the villages, and should therefore be seen as social actors in the economy of village life. Hedlund pointed out this inadequacy in a seminal paper addressing the issue of agricultural extension:

"Social anthropological field studies have largely ignored the importance of advisory and extension personnel in the study of rural communities. These studies have tended to focus either on local, social and economic processes or on centre-periphery situations in which such institutions as migration, urbanization or market forces have brought together local and supra-local levels."

(1984, p.226).

Taking a cue from Hedlund, the present study situates itself at the intersection of formal institutions promoting "development" and the supposed subjects of these development initiatives. By intersection I intend to convey both a geographical locus of interaction, and the point at which different ideas about what development is come into

contact with one another. The reasons for stressing cognitive and practical confluence will become clear later. To avoid the pitfall of extreme localisation, and because field staff of formal institutions live both in the village world and the urban-based hierarchies of their various departments, I devote part of my analysis to relations with these hierarchies, through data collected at provincial level. Whilst Hedlund did this for the case of a particular extension worker, I broaden the analysis to include others in that department, and representatives of most other formal institutions at work in chief Mabumba's. In this empirical sense the thesis is original. To date, many anthropological studies which speak of the village in relation to the nation state have focused on economy in a broad sense, referring particularly to the relations between capitalist state and not yet fully capitalised villages (e.g. Poewe, 1976). In Mabumba, faced with the new phenomenon of a considerable range of active government agencies, I have been able to add to these materialist analyses a detailed interpretation of configurations of power, knowledge and activities, which have tended elsewhere to be subsumed analytically in the progress of capital.

In a substantive sense, I am trying to follow Norman Long's call to bridge the gap between overarching political economy and actor-oriented style analyses. Authority in interpreting and formulating "development" has resided with economists bearing a too abstract theoretical framework. Long's technique is to focus on what he terms "interfaces": the junctures "between different levels of social order where conflicts of value and social interest are most likely to occur." (1984, p.10). For the development sociologist, these interfaces are often found where government and other agencies



intervene to implement policies and programmes.

The rationale behind the interface approach is that the majority of political economy analyses, both Marxist and non-Marxist, give undue weight to the determining force of extra-local powers, imputed to the state machinery, and more generally the global hegemony of capital<sup>1</sup>. It is theoretically unsatisfactory to base analysis on the idea of external determination when, empirically, it is clear that ordinary people "actively engage in shaping the outcomes of processes of development." (op. cit. p.2). At the same time, it is the macroeconomic analyses which most clearly influence the thinking of development planners so that "there is a tendency for policy analysis to adopt a rather mechanical view of the relations between policy formulation, implementation and outcome." (op. cit. p.10.)<sup>2</sup>.

"The often large gap between the rhetoric of national planning and policy and what happens "on the ground" calls for close-up analysis of the types of interactions, power relations, negotiating resources and legitimating norms and values of interface actors and organizations. Such interactional studies reveal concretely the nature of State-peasant relations in particular localities or regions, and thus indirectly facilitate a fuller understanding of the character and significance of specific State formations."

(op. cit. p.13).

Though general overviews, in their academic or policy manifestations, may offer some insight into the relationship between stated policy objectives and results, the crucial middleground is missing; that delimited social arena in which policy "is put into action and

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<sup>1</sup> Long gives a useful summary of the different approaches in this category: dependency theory; variations on articulation of modes of production; incorporation (1984, pp 18-22).

<sup>2</sup> Clay and Schaffer make a similar point about policy and implementation tending to be understood as a linear progression of sequential phases (1984, p.3 ff.)

reshaped or sometimes even radically transformed." (op. cit. p.12).

It is this middleground which the thesis is intended to address.

#### Theoretical perspective.

The question of which theoretical perspective might most fruitfully be applied to the issues outlined is an open one. Long suggested the possible relevance of such approaches as access theory (Schaffer and Lamb, 1976; Harriss, 1978); symbolic interactionist and cultural analysis of interactions between officials and clients (Handelman, 1978; Raby, 1978); social field analysis focused on power (Van Velzen, 1977); organisational analysis (Esman and Uphoff, 1984); and various ideas emerging on the concept of "local state" (Johnston, 1982: 187-260).

Returning to the scenario set by the opening quotation, one problem with these sorts of analyses is that whilst focusing on the interface between actors and the institutions that enter their "life worlds" (to use one of Long's phrases), they appear to preserve the transcendental subject as an irreducible playing piece<sup>3</sup>.

Methodologically they are an advance on the erstwhile cleavage between economy and individual (whether as atom or culture-bearing member of some quite small unit such as household or village), yet they are devices which cut the cake differently, rather than revising the view of what constitutes the cake. For example, how to relate the institution and individual along a dimension such as ideology (assuming, here, the value of such a concept) cannot be problematised

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<sup>3</sup> This in spite of the claim that as a sociological term "actor" can refer either to an individual or an interest group consisting of more than one person.

in a sophisticated way. Put differently, how actors and institutions come to formulate concepts which influence their actions and the outcomes, the observable processes, of development, is not properly accounted for. Institutions and villagers may be shown to bear different rationalities, which have certain logical consequences for their interaction, but these rationalities are taken as given; their genesis and ontological statuses with respect to each other remain obscure.

The problem extends down even to analyses at the individual level. The decline of per caput food production in sub-Saharan Africa over the past thirty years has stimulated an interest in decision making by petty producers, among both academics and practitioners concerned with development. In these various studies, Gould indicates a fundamental bifurcation between "rational actor" models on the one hand, and the "economy of affection", or "moral economy of the peasant" school on the other (the latter stressing some corporate entity, such as lineage or extended family, as superordinate to the individual, and the main dynamic underpinning individual behaviour). Yet, empirically, both tendencies have been shown to prevail in most social contexts, and, in Gould's terms, "The point is ... to explain the persistence of both trends and their inter-relation." (1987, p.3).

Gould looks to the concept of "strategic ideology" as an analytical merging point; by which he means "a mode of intentionality which provides self-justification to individuals in their pursuit of their livelihood." (op. cit. p.4). In the Southern African context he identifies two such ideologies: an individualist-rationalist *ideology*

of accumulation and a corporate-collectivist ideology of distribution. These, he says, are grounded in material conditions, the two predominant economic forms in the region: the market and the lineage-based domestic economy respectively (ibid.).

For Gould "The vitality and persistence of these two ideologies stems from the resilience of the related economic forms of the market and the domestic economy in their competition for the economic resources of rural society." (ibid.). In a similar vein, though for different reasons, Holy has looked to new types of actor-oriented analysis. His particular concern, in the Zambian context, was to produce an informed account of how certain changes in social organisation are connected with modifications in the mode of production. Rightly, he criticised Poewe (1981) and others who have deduced the decline of certain matrilineal practices (inheritance; other forms of distribution) from the spread of a capitalist logic (which is opposed to certain ideological tenets of matriliney), rather than give a fully substantive and theoretical account of what is occurring. His proposal to avoid a circular explanation is a schema of representational and operational models<sup>4</sup> which social actors hold and use; the former being about how things ought to be, the latter how to cope with practical situations (his account allows for certain apparent contradictions between life as it is lived, and what might be called cultural ideologies, to be accommodated).

Gould's and Holy's approaches, like Long's, still have the limitation of preserving the transcendental subject as an assumption; and tied

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<sup>4</sup> Holy, 1986. pp. 4-8.

to this, the concept "ideology", as a locus of power, becomes inevitably slippery<sup>5</sup>. Ideology has to be either above everything (superstructural), or something which the individual is free to manipulate, in different ways, according to context. The account of power is impoverished: how does it become expressed through individuals and institutions, monetary and non-monetary relations, different ideas over how to behave economically? What are the historical relations between Gould's strategic ideologies? In a state such as Zambia where formal government began as an alien imposition, and left behind a certain legacy in the relations between urban centres and rural peoples, no account of the interventions of government institutions can be complete without an analysis of power, even where the style of intervention has purportedly some such aim as the betterment of rural living conditions. There again, those kinds of political science studies focused on local politics have at their root a largely judicial notion of power which has dominated Western analyses of power (c.f. Foucault, 1980, *passim*).

What might be useful is some kind of theoretical account which tries to elucidate the relations between institutions (of various kinds), individuals, concepts and practices, not focused either at the strategising individual, nor the overbearing state, but at how particular sets of relations come into being. One also that will treat power without needing to use the term "ideology". Empirically, too, such a style would look attractive: the area chosen for field work was one which had been largely ignored by government until what might be called an eruption of development activity in the late

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Foucault, 1980, p.118.

1970s, since which Mabumba has become a focus for intervention. Largely, this has centred on encouraging the production of certain improved varieties of maize as a cash crop. This "enterprise" has been presented by institutions as a technological package; a set of inputs and instructions on how to use them, a relatively quick route to improved farming, prosperity for the small farmer, and national food security. But all I have said so far might suggest such an understanding is naive; that a technical intervention is always more than that, since it involves relations between institutions and villagers. Some theoretical framework is needed to get at whether the institutional understanding is naive, and if so in what senses? And then, why should the institutional understanding persist?

Such an approach is to be found in the work of Michel Foucault, in his notion of discourse and the apparatuses (dispositifs) through which discursive formations are articulated. Since discourse is a term used in different senses by different writers, and Foucault himself came to use it in a number of ways, I need to put forward exactly what I take it to mean, to show how it might be used as an analytical tool for understanding the kinds of data I collected.

Foucault's original project was to look at what made possible the historical emergence of certain fields of investigation, such as psychiatry in the early 19th century. So, in "Madness and Civilization", he wants to discover how it is that psychiatry, as a discipline, "had neither the same content, nor the same internal organization, nor the same place in medicine, nor the same practical function, nor the same methods as the traditional chapter on 'diseases of the head' or 'nervous diseases' to be found in

eighteenth century medical treatises." (1972, p.179). The revelation of this particular study was that "what made it possible at the time it appeared, what brought about this great change in the economy of concepts, analyses and demonstrations, was a whole set of relations between hospitalization, internment, the conditions and procedures of social exclusion, the rules of jurisprudence, the norms of industrial labour and bourgeois morality, in short a whole group of relations that characterized for this discursive practice the formation of its statements." (ibid.).

Psychiatry, then, was a discursive practice, a unity of statements, and Foucault wished to show that "these unities form a number of autonomous, but not independent, domains, governed by rules, but in perpetual transformation, anonymous and without a subject, but imbuing a great many individual works." (1972, Afterword).

Discourses are made up of statements. By this term Foucault means things which are said (verbally and textually), but not in the sense of propositions describable by rules of linguistic practice.

Statements are made up of signs, and yet "To describe a statement is not a matter of isolating and characterising a horizontal segment; but of defining the conditions in which the function that gave a series of signs (a series that is not necessarily grammatical or logically structured) an existence, and a specific existence, can operate." (1972, p.108). So, whereas a linguistic analysis would ask according to what rules is a statement made, what Foucault is interested in is how it is, historically, that one particular statement appears rather than any other.

The originality of Foucault's notion of discourse lies in asserting

that discourses are not ways of talking about things so much as systems for the production of objects: discourse is about the grounds of possibility for recognising things. Discourses are not groups of signs but "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak." (1972, p.49). An example would be the phenomenon of imprisonment as developed in the nineteenth century. Whilst appearing superficially as the most rational means for dealing with criminality, "the prison operated as a process of filtering, concentrating, professionalising and circumscribing a criminal milieu" (1980, pp 194-195). Crucially, the prison produced, rather than merely controlled, a particular sort of person, quite different from a miscreant of the eighteenth century.

Already, though, the discussion has moved to include institutions and architectural spaces, as well as discourse. In Foucault's early work the focus was on obviously strong unities such as medicine and political economy. Later he turned to sexuality, a less unified field of investigation (not identifiable with a particular human science), and gave more attention to the apparatus in which discourse is situated, "a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions" (1980, p.194). "The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements." (ibid.) The question to be addressed was what is the nature of the connection that can exist between such diverse elements?

In "The History of Sexuality: An Introduction" Foucault answered



the question by challenging the established view that the nineteenth century had been an age of sexual repression in Western Europe. He demonstrated, rather, that sexuality was put into discourse during this period: "Not any less was said about it (sex); on the contrary. But things were said in a different way; it was different people who said them, from different points of view, and in order to achieve different results." (1978, p.27). "What the discourse of sexuality was initially applied to wasn't sex, but the body, the sexual organs, pleasures, kinship relations, interpersonal relations, and so forth." (1980, p.210). What began as a heterogeneous ensemble became overlaid with the apparatus of sexuality so as to produce "the idea of sex." (ibid).

In all Foucault's analyses forms of knowledge are a focus of attention, and their conditions of emergence. An important shift in the later work is toward integrating an analysis of power (his cratology of *pouvoir-savoir*); not power in its Western judicial sense, but as integral to discourse and knowledge: "Between techniques of knowledge and strategies of power, there is no exteriority, even if they have specific roles and are linked together on the basis of their difference." (1978, p.98). For Foucault, power cannot be synonymous with overt coercion, since its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms. It is, rather, "the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable." (1978, p.93).

In the "putting into discourse" of sex, Foucault finds channels power takes to penetrate and control everyday pleasure. This process he

identifies as a polymorphous technology of power. For example, the development of psychiatry led increasingly to allow, and demand, social controls of various forms of "perversity"; whilst the "sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species" (1978, p.43), "a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy, and possibly a mysterious physiology." (ibid.) The point is also made strongly in "Discipline and Punish". Discipline as a type of power became a very strong means for the control of individuals in Europe (ultimately in the apparatus of the prison) because "He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection."

(Foucault, 1979, pp. 202-203).

Thus the triad power-knowledge-discourse (in its apparatus) can have the effect of redefining subjectivity. Not all discourses, though, are equally powerful (discipline is a particularly strong one): "discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it." (1978, p. 101). In the later Foucault, then, discourse is not something monolithic, but inherently unstable. To summarise, we have seen that discourse for Foucault is partly to do with words people use; but more than this it is systematically implicated in historically specified constellations of power/knowledge, in which words themselves are not separable from institutions, forms of knowledge and techniques of power. That is

not to say that a discursive register does not exist, in which ways of talking produce the things of which they speak, but that these discourses can only be understood in the context of their apparatuses.

Why might a Foucauldian style analysis be interesting in relation to the recently constituted field of "development", when his concerns were large epochs of European history? The fact that development has only emerged as some kind of umbrella term for a group of academic and practical endeavours since the second world war (a generally accepted view, e.g. Sen, 1987) suggests a parallel<sup>6</sup>. "Development" is a coming together of different influences through a range of institutions, but hard to pin down and delineate as an object; as Crehan says, "a large and slippery concept" (1988, p.3). Where has it come from and what does it do? The work which originally defined a field for development came from influential economists in the 1950s; Lewis's "Theory of Economic Growth" typifies the early economic "take-off" models (e.g. Lewis, W.A. 1965). Since then, the types of model in favour (both academically and governmentally) have varied according to the apparent results of the implementation of theory through development policy. Through the 1960s the focus shifted from growth to equity, with the realisation that rapid industrialisation suffered many infrastructural problems, and a new push was made to develop local and national economies through agriculture (e.g. Lewis,

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<sup>6</sup> It was only in the late colonial period that the term "development" gained much currency in Zambia, with the appointment of provincial Development Commissioners and various efforts to promote development in the more remote areas of the country, including Luapula (e.g. Halcrow, 1959). And only after Independence was a national body, the National Commission for Development Planning (NCDP) instituted, formed from the Central Planning Department.

J.P. and Kallab, 1986 passim). In the 1970s it seemed increasingly apparent that development benefits were not "trickling" down to the poorest people in developing countries. To counter this tendency, basic needs (BN) became a new watch phrase, the aim now being to alleviate poverty through the reduction of unemployment (the ILO's work typifies this approach, e.g. 1977, and 1981, on Zambia).

The environmentally conscious 1980s have spawned "sustainable development"; development has become about the maintenance and perpetuation of sound human-natural environmental relations. Increasingly the Green Movement is influencing developmental thinking, with a prominent role for various forms of ecology. Simultaneously, feminist influence has come to be felt in development circles, and many national and international donor agencies now specify gender as an organisational perspective in their work, with an aim to reach more women.

This is a very brief thumb sketch of the major concerns which have invested development theory and practice over the past forty years. Whilst progressively more and more disciplines have been introduced to the field, what all the styles have in common is that they are models of human economic behaviour which through policy, plans and institutions have been translated into methods for modifying people's economic statuses (and the foci vary from single households to national, or even regional, economies). It is the self-conscious aim in development to translate models into action which makes a theoretical perspective uniting power, knowledge and practice attractive, if not indispensable.



The idea of discourse has already gained some attention in analyses

of development. Apthorpe deconstructed styles of policy discourse in policy documents as a means to showing that

"A language of argumentation is not only a language. Through repeated use it comes to engender some properties of, and tendencies to, thinking and willing of its own. Its origins become obscure. Its own specificity and impacts go unnoticed. Different discourse habits inculcate different indications and orientations of their own about areas and grounds for comparability of policies." (1984, p. 128).

Others have moved analysis away from texts alone, to begin to address development as discourse in the arena of Long's interfaces. Querejazu (1987) considered a Bolivian case, with a particular interest in the extent of understanding, conflict and miscommunication about relevant concepts, ideas and assumptions of those differentially involved in and affected by the development process. These issues inevitably arise in this thesis, but I devote more attention to the context of discourse (its apparatus) and the ways in which the whole acts as a substrate for the extension of technologies of power. It is the relations between the discursive and non-discursive aspects of development which are the focus, more than the level of verbal communication between "agents" and "recipients" of development. My aim is to see whether the processes of development can justifiably be understood as constrained by an apparatus, and in what senses such an understanding enriches previous analyses grounded in certain, rigorous, materialist conventions, whether Marxist or not.

I am not trying to use "discourse" in as fully theorised a way as in some of Foucault's presentations. Rather, it is an analytical tool for revealing possible connections which (at least in the discourses of interested parties) have tended to remain invisible in analysing "development". A perspective from which to look at things. Foucault

himself did not attribute to discourse the status of a theory; rather it was an attempt to look for coherence at the limits of analytical traditions. So this thesis is a weaving together of a number of interpretative threads, and does not attempt to be unified through any master theoretical tools of the sort which lend characteristic rigour to materialist analyses (the economic meaning of capital; class struggle, etc.). Rather, it is an attempt to situate materialist processes in a wider context of meaning; to identify quite specific mechanisms through which capital succeeds (or fails): in Foucault's terms "Power is quite different from and more complicated, dense and pervasive than a set of laws or a state apparatus. It's impossible to get the development of productive forces characteristic of capitalism if you don't at the same time have apparatuses of power." (1980, p.158). Whether what I saw in Mabumba might reasonably be called an apparatus of development can only emerge from a protracted examination of a number of different kinds of relation. I can therefore only invoke or deny it fully in my conclusions. To assume its existence or properties along the way would be to negate the point of a discourse analysis.

The situation encountered in Mabumba in 1987 was of a number of institutions represented by field level staff bearing various resources and educational programmes for development. It was immediately apparent that the new practices being introduced (especially the growing of improved maize) were, at least technically, quite different from those already existing in the villages. Do these sets of practices, teachings, resources and institutions possibly represent a Foucauldian apparatus? Is there some kind of unity here not existing in the same field (agricultural

production), or existing in a different way, prior to the arrival of the interventionists? Does the relationship between village and formal institution involve a "putting into discourse" of certain things? Does "development" in Mabumba have certain parallels for analysis with "sexuality" in Foucault? To try to answer these questions I shall look for the principles which guide how villagers in Mabumba organise their economic lives, with most attention being devoted to agriculture (both the major economic activity of the area and the predominant focus of governmental interest). Are there significant differences between practices originating in externally based (though locally represented) institutions and those other practices apparently of indigenous origin? If there are, in what do they consist? If institutions address the production of only a small selection of resources (as they do in this case), is the new modus operandi being translated by villagers into other areas of production? If so, is the translation fully understandable at a technical level, or is it discursive also; people redefining what they do and who they are in an inseparable way?

#### Methodology.

The data I use to answer these questions are of several kinds, some traditional to ethnography, others not. I make reference to two distinct sources of textual information. Conventionally, I draw on the academic literature within anthropology. But, addressing the perspectives of development institutions, I also bring into analysis an amount of written material which informs and represents their actions. The sorts of document I mean are methodological texts (how to carry out on-farm research), the data which institutions collect

and interpret (such as crop forecasting information by extension staff), and presentations of their work in annual and other reports. All of the institutions I investigate are literate and formal: texts are crucial elements in the formation and expression of institutional concepts. For this reason my interpretations of such texts become an important element in the thesis.

Oral testimony is a second element in my institutional analysis. In the field I made regular visits to locally stationed individuals to discuss seasonal progress, to gain an informed picture of how they perceived their work and working conditions and the different kinds of villager (as identified by them) with whom they worked. I also interviewed more senior institution representatives in the provincial capital, Mansa, to gain a broader view of organisational capacities and aims (and, importantly, comments on institutional problems not likely to appear in official documents).

The third component for my institutional analysis is participant observation of meetings. These were both at village level (field days for extension demonstrations; annual meetings of the cooperative societies, etc.) and training sessions for institution staff in Mansa. Such meetings gave insights into relative perceptions of the villagers and institution staff, and an arena to examine the nature of any conflicts of interest. They also gave access to a wider sample of staff than in Mabumba itself, so I could check for representativeness of individual biographies and opinions.

Participant observation also was used to inform my ideas of the wider context of village life in which "development" is situated; social occasions such as beer drinks brought forth much spontaneous



discussion of agriculture and institutions. On the basis of a sample frame drawn up by ARPT (see below) I selected forty households in the chief's and neighbouring villages (enumerated in the census by sex of household head and level of production of different crops) and repeated a simple interview to gain a broad outline of the local agricultural economy, and an entrée into the community. Several of these households I repeatedly visited for informal discussion and semi-structured interviews, using them as points for the tracing of kin and other social networks. This information was used to interpret the nature of local social structure, and some of it appears as case studies to illustrate relations between agricultural production and social structure in the first half of the thesis. Farm visits were made throughout field work to collect the "technical" data presented, and allow the agenda for agricultural conversations to be set by the villagers themselves, in relation to their personal farming concerns at different times of year.

Shortly after arrival in Mabumba I recruited Mr Abel Mumba to assist me as translator. He continued to give invaluable help throughout field work, both with my academic pursuits, and, along with his wife, Miriam, in the more practical business of coping with village life. As my work was divided between villages and formal institutions, some interviews were in CiBemba; others necessarily in English. With research thus divided, I continued to need Abel's help with village interviews, though as time progressed he would clarify questions and answers rather than translate in full. This arrangement was doubtless a compromise, but given the time available (one year) and the focus for research, it was inevitable that I would not be able to

collect rich detail of language nuance. So, although theoretically I focus on discourse, it is not in the sense of a detailed exegesis of styles of expression.

This last point leads to the need to make explicit some other limitations in my data.

#### Limitations and apologia.

First, my examination of "development" refers almost exclusively to agricultural development, for the reason that the vast majority of resources allocated for development in Mabumba are aimed at this sector. Agricultural themes are prominent, even in departments with little connection with the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Development (the Department of Social Development offers functional literacy courses on improved farming, etc.). Whilst the Department of Health is engaged in issues such as hygiene and nutrition, I have had to leave these aside. Additionally, I did not study disputes which were settled through the local court as I was not given access to this institution. These omissions do not detract substantially from my arguments, though: the pattern of relations between villagers and institutions seemed similar across the range of government institutions, as supported by some data, especially as presented in chapter 8.

Secondly, as my focus was to be the interface between development institutions and villagers, I had necessarily to work somewhere where such institutions had realised a presence. Most of my analysis refers to chief Mabumba's village, and other villages in the near vicinity, which had most contact with institutions. I was able to

spend less time in the more remote villages, though I have tried to indicate the influence of geographical isolation where possible. More importantly, I was known to be attached to one of the government institutions involved in agriculture, and so what I learned from people was to some degree biased by what they perceived my interests to be (though this bias was not universal, and tended to lessen as I came to know informants better). Reflecting the pattern which the thesis establishes, a letter from Zambia after I had left indicated that many people thought I was mostly interested in maize, and I would have to "come back again" to learn more about certain issues. For example, I cannot give as much attention as might be desirable to accusations of witchcraft connected with agricultural production (though again the significance of these would seem to vary geographically, and negatively with degree of involvement in new forms of production; I don't think I have made a major omission in analyses of the central villages).

Thirdly, most writings on rural development in Zambia talk explicitly and at length about the country's ruling, single party UNIP (United National Independence Party). The reader will not find this institution mentioned apart from a short section in chapter 8. My justification for what might seem an obvious omission is that UNIP played a very small role in the life of Mabumba in 1987-88: local feelings about the party could be characterised as apathy, rather than active support or antipathy. There were, of course, people appointed to the various local party positions, but they were all but inactive qua party representatives. Even the Ward Chairmen, the most significant local officers, rarely were found away from their home villages: one was reckoned a drunkard, and both were seen as

ineffectual relative to their own rhetoric about party support for the people. At this time and in this place, UNIP was making a tiny contribution among formal institutions promoting development.

It is usual in village ethnographies of Zambia to see some village genealogies. I present no complete genealogies because my focus of analysis was a combination of two contiguous and highly interrelated villages (Chipanta and Mabumba) whose joint population exceeded one thousand. Size alone would have made trying to draw a complete genealogy futile; additionally, these villages are a nucleus of development on a major road, and are being settled by a significant number of strangers. Logically, too, the task may have been pointless. As will be seen in chapter three, Ushi kinship is a very fluid affair made up of relatively few, highly inclusive categories. The status of any genealogy which purports to indicate biological relationship is therefore highly dubious. Where I wish to indicate the significance of these categories in practice (as in case study material), I use delimited genealogies showing relationships I was fairly sure of.

These are some empirical limitations in the current study. To overcome them, though, would mean complementary work somewhere away from connections with institutions. Whilst I may have a bias toward institutional activities and how villagers perceived them, and not so full an account of activities lying outside the ambit of formal institutions, I feel justified in doing so to redress an imbalance, found in so many older ethnographies, in favour of the village as sovereign domain.

Also referring to the division between village and formal

institutions, an apology is in order here. I have, with a few exceptions, not tried to disguise personal identities in the text. This would be pointless in the case of villagers, as they are not accountable to anyone for what I have to say. However, the situation in formal institutions is rather different: where I have referred to institutional positions, it would be possible to identify the actual incumbents at the time of field work. I must therefore state emphatically that when discussing these people what I am concerned with are the kinds of ideas and actions which are expressions of professional training and fulfilment of job descriptions. I am not making commentaries on personalities. I believe such an ethnographic approach to institutions is an improvement on dry analyses of, for example, the theoretical content of agricultural extension, divorced from the context of its enactment. But I apologise if accidental offence is caused by statements which were not intended as evaluative of particular individuals.

#### Order of presentation.

Chapter two of the thesis is a detailed description of agricultural production in Mabumba, making comparison between those techniques originating indigenously, and those which have come through institutional intervention. It is about what developmentalists call Indigenous Technical Knowledge (ITK), set alongside institutional knowledge. The chapter begins to introduce evidence that certain differences between the products institutions promote and those already present in the village, of a physical, rather conceptual order, reinforce differential premises on which the validity of agricultural knowledge is constructed. Differences between

"traditional" and "introduced" practices are never merely technical.

The next section is rather like a traditional ethnography of the Southern African region in dwelling on the character of kinship as a component of social and economic organisation. Chapter three is about kinship as an idea informing what people do, whereas chapters four and five take up its substantive role in relation to actual processes of the organisation of production and subsequent distribution of resources. This, then, is a form of political economy of village life. It presents the social context in which the technical knowledge discussed in chapter two needs to be understood.

The following three chapters form a section central to the thesis, presenting a detailed analysis of the various formal institutions at work in Mabumba. They focus on the particular staff representing institutions; their perceptions of their work and of the villagers whom they are supposed to serve, the perceptions villagers have of them, and their interactions during the period of field work. The relations of field staff with their superiors and administrative conditions are also dealt with, and the perceptions and roles of higher level staff.

Chapter nine moves analysis to a more public level, to consider how the major local leader (the chief) is situated with respect to development processes, and in what senses he can be seen to manipulate, or be manipulated by them as they enter the realm of local politics. In other words, power is considered at the level of the chiefdom, and its relations with particular forms of activity and authority.

The final chapter reviews what has been presented so far, in analysing the work of a particular institution, ARPT, which is perhaps rather different from the others; a research organisation, and therefore, like the ethnographer, interested in collecting data from specified locations and interpreting them (though as the basis for practical intervention). Throughout the thesis a distinction is retained between those practices introduced by development institutions, and those preexisting, or at least not receiving attention from, their intervention. In each chapter different aspects of this division are explored, to see if it is invested with meaning not reducible to a simple two sector formula (village vs. institution; traditional vs. modern; capitalism vs. domestic economy, etc.), a formula which has underlain so many previous analyses of relations between the village and its wider environment in Zambia<sup>7</sup>. It is an analytical division from which the question can be posed, is there an apparatus and discourse of development in Mabumba? The concluding chapter summarises the evidence. Further, regardless of theoretical conclusions, it considers what light has been thrown on problems faced by development research institutions ("irrational use of resources by peasants" etc.). What from an institution's perspective (as characterised in

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<sup>7</sup> Parallel kinds of analyses are beginning to appear in other anthropological accounts of development, drawing on Bakhtin's notion of dialogue, rather than Foucault's discourse. Such studies focus on how different meanings are produced attached to concepts falling under the umbrella of "development" (e.g. "self-reliance") through active processes of interpretation. Such meanings, understood by particular individuals and groups of people, may be seen as entering a process of struggle which mirrors struggles of interest in the economic sphere (e.g. Crehan, 1988, pp. 2-5). Whilst such approaches lean more to a materialist stance than does mine, I see them as essentially complementary.

the thesis) may appear as methodological shortcomings can look rather different in the political and historical context of state-peasant relations which I have attempted to trace. In closing, some tentative suggestions will be made about possible ways forward in the relations between villagers and government institutions in rural Zambia.

#### The field work situation.

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to describing how field work was organised, and an introduction to the particular place it was conducted in.

The choice of where to work stemmed from academic and practical considerations. Audrey Richards produced classic pioneer work on issues now under the rubric of "development" for the central Bemba area of Northern Province (1939); at SOAS there was an opportunity to begin learning CiBemba prior to field work. The Bemba language group area covers most of Northern, Luapula, and Copperbelt provinces (and a considerable area of Central province). I chose Luapula on the grounds that less ethnography exists of this area and that it is glossed in most general accounts as a distinctive part of Zambia with an economy based largely on fishing and a staple diet of cassava (cf. various grains in most other areas of the country). Until the last years of the colonial period it was treated as a rural backwater, away from the line-of-rail, and only since the late 1970s has there been a significant push from the government to develop the province agriculturally. Interesting, then, both for new ethnography and a ferment of recent development activities arising in a number of institutions.



To make a sustained and detailed analysis of how development institutions were working (in particular at organisational levels above the village) depended on forming a close relationship with at least one of them, through which other contacts could be made. Given the ethnographer's prior academic training in agricultural science an attachment to the Department of Agriculture looked the most likely, and shortly after arriving in Luapula province, I was invited to form a cooperative working arrangement with the provincial Adaptive Research Planning Team (ARPT), a Farming Systems Research team.

Details of the aims and activities of these teams are presented in chapter ten. Briefly, they conduct agronomic and economic research with the participation of farmers on those farmers' own fields, to model accurately the technical and socio-economic conditions under which farmers work. The idea, then, is to develop new agricultural technologies from informed local experience, rather than the more traditional practice of intense research on isolated research stations, the results of which are passed to farmers through extension services. At the same time, ARPTs are intended to act as a coordinating point for the continued activities of the established Research and Extension branches of the Department of Agriculture.

A basic tenet of the Farming Systems approach is that it welds biological, economic and social understanding of the small farmer; it is an interdisciplinary approach. On my arrival in Luapula, the provincial team was supposed to consist of agronomists, economists, a Research Extension Liaison Officer (RELO) and Rural Sociologists (the latter covering Luapula and Northern provinces jointly). Logistical problems had made it difficult for the Northern Province based

sociologists to cover Luapula as well, so I was invited to occupy the position of rural sociologist in the Luapula team for the duration of field work (September 1987 to September 1988). In exchange for presenting some of my data on social issues to the team as reports I received the use of a motorcycle and office facilities, and took part in ARPT meetings at local and national level qua rural sociologist.

The remaining choice to be made was which of the three areas within the province chosen as research areas by ARPT would I decide to situate myself in? These were: Mukunta, in the far north of Nchelenge district near the shores of lake Mweru; Mabo, on the edge of lake Kampolombo in Samfya district, and Mabumba, on the plateau between Mansa and Samfya, in Mansa district. Whilst the two former are characterised as fishing areas, the third is mostly populated by agriculturalists. I chose Mabumba, again for a combination of academic and logistical reasons. It is closest, both to ARPT headquarters and Mansa, the provincial capital, allowing easy access to representatives of other institutions (and the motorcycle was not always reliable). It is, furthermore, an agricultural rather than fishing area, and so has received quite high priority for government intervention (fishing remains a largely autonomous enterprise). It is also the case that the fishing areas (especially the Luapula valley) have been extensively described in earlier ethnographies (e.g. Cunnison, 1959; Poewe, 1976).

The area defined by the Ushi Native Authority (pre-Independence), of which Mabumba is one chiefdom, has received relatively little ethnographic attention in the past. George Kay, as a human geographer, wrote informative economic and social descriptions of

Mansa (then Fort Rosebery) and chief Kalaba's, the chiefdom bordering Mabumba to the north (1960 and 1964a, respectively). He also produced an account of Ushi settlement history (1964b) which I draw on in chapter 9. Other than his work, there is a follow-up study of chief Kalaba's by Shurmer (1968) which takes the form of an M.Phil thesis couched in the terms of "dual economy." There exists, then, some comparative social science material on the Mansa plateau area, which provides some of the historical background for this thesis, but no book-length monograph.

#### The setting.

I give only a brief introduction here to Mabumba, as much of the historical background and detail of the environment will unfold through subsequent chapters.

Chief Mabumba's village is situated in the middle of Mansa District some 20 km east of the provincial capital, Mansa (at 11°16' S; 29°03' E), on the main tarred road linking Mansa with Samfya, 80km further east on the shores of lake Bangweulu (see Map 1, Appendix 4). It is thus in easy communication with two important trading centres in Luapula province. The chiefdom is at an altitude not varying more than 50m or so either side of 1200m; it is part of the vast gently rolling plateau which characterises much of northern Zambia. Most of the landscape is covered by fairly sparse miombo savannah woodland (dominated by various species of Julbernardia and Brachystegia tree). Locally its density varies, and trees are noticeably scarce in a swathe several kilometres wide either side of the densely settled main road area. Interspersed with the woodland every few kilometres are wide, perennially wet shallow depressions, centred on small, often

highly ramified streams. These are known as dambos throughout ex-British Central Africa, the local CiBemba term being ilungu (pl. malungu).

The majority of the population lives in a relatively small number of large villages near to the main roads. Map 2 in Appendix 4. shows the distribution of these villages. In the more remote bush areas there are also small hamlets, distinguishable by houses built in the old manner from wattle and daub (in all the main villages the chief enforces the use of fired brick). The major villages have populations of upwards of two hundred, and are very densely built. Several have village bars, selling commercial maize beer (Chibuku), and there are a few retail outlets, usually run by village headmen. All the larger villages contain one or more churches, and Mabumba and Monga have government primary schools (and Mabumba also a new basic secondary school). As a rural centre Mabumba has a local court (in addition to the chief's traditional court), clinic and agricultural camp (where the extension staff live).

Around the villages themselves there are distinct areas occupied by more or less permanent fields, in which maize and various vegetable crops are grown. Further away from the villages fields dominated by cassava are found interspersed with the surrounding bush, which shows evidence of being under the citemene slash-and-burn regime in the past. Yet further away still (some 10km and more) are the true shifting fields. Whilst much of this thesis considers the introduction and significance of permanent forms of cropping, it is worth retaining a visual impression which is not so different from that recorded by Audrey Richards in the 1930s; a largely empty

countryside dotted irregularly with villages, except along the major highways. Such emptiness should not be misinterpreted; shifting cultivation systems are only sustainable through extensive, low intensity use of land. But the visual contrast between citemene and permanent land use is striking, even though the occurrence of permanent fields is still quite localised around Mabumba, reminding one of the relative newness of the institution-supported farming techniques which I am about to describe.

## Chapter 2: Production techniques in Mabumba.

The purpose of this chapter is description. It introduces the range of agricultural production activities engaged in by the inhabitants of Mabumba in 1987-88, providing the raw material to be socially contextualised in the proceeding chapters<sup>1</sup>. Secondly, it takes technical knowledge in agriculture as a particular focus, and records details not previously collected in this part of Zambia, to complement the earlier work of Audrey Richards (1939) in Northern Province, and contemporary studies of agroecological classifications made by ARPT there. Thirdly, and importantly, it begins to sketch the relations between knowledge, practices and sources, to see if these are more than incidental. I begin with a brief history of agriculture in twentieth century Mabumba, to provide a context for understanding contemporary practice.

### Major historical developments.

A son of the first headman Chipanta said at the time the village was founded (1930) the woodland in the immediate area was quite abundant, and people had large citemene (ash cultivation) gardens on which much finger millet was grown. The crop was used to make beer, then as now, but an important difference was that a great deal of it was eaten; in fact the larger proportion of ubwali<sup>2</sup> was made from millet. During his lifetime cassava had supplanted millet as the Ushi staple crop, a response to increasing scarcity of woodland abundant enough

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<sup>1</sup> Indigenous terms which will be important in later chapters are distinguished by bold type.

<sup>2</sup> Thick porridge eaten as the staple with a relish of vegetables, fish or meat.

to be burnt sustainably for ash gardens (cassava did well enough in reused soil). Whereas the Ushi used to live in small scattered villages, since the 1930s the government and the chiefs had encouraged living in large, permanent villages, which meant the distance to citemene areas was ever increasing<sup>3</sup>. The extended shifting cycles based on cassava had, he said, been copied from the peoples of the Luapula valley for whom cassava immemorially had been the staple<sup>4</sup>.

People also had semi-permanent gardens (mabala) near to the village, though these occupied a far smaller area than the citemene fields. They were planted with vegetable crops: groundnuts, sweet potatoes, and sometimes green maize, especially around termite mounds where the soil was fertile (most of this crop was grown in first year citemene gardens, and unlike the sorts of maize brought by extension, the crop was never grown alone nor with fertilisers<sup>5</sup>). Asked about changes in agriculture since the 1930s, respondents

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<sup>3</sup> See chapter nine on control of population distribution.

<sup>4</sup> The report of Dr. Lacerda's journey to Kazembe in 1798 indicates cassava as the staple food in the Lunda capital "During the six months of Manoel Caetano Pereira's stay, the king made him many presents, amongst which was a large form of manioc - there the staff of life." (Burton, R.F., 1873, p.40). Other sources (Chanda and Yambayamba, passim) suggest cassava production expanded rapidly in the first quarter of this century with demand for food in the expanding administrative centres of Samfya and Fort Rosebery (now Mansa). By the 1940s, cassava was recorded as the major staple on the Fort Rosebery plateau (Trapnell, C.G., 1953, p.23).

<sup>5</sup> Local maize, as grown in citemene, is distinguished from cash crop maize by the terms mataba yemiunda and mataba Caushi. Mataba is the generic term, and used alone applies to cash crop maize. Yemiunda is locational, meaning "of (first year) citemene gardens". Caushi is from the root Ushi, being the name of the people. Maize as an indigenous crop, used fresh as a vegetable, is clearly distinguished linguistically from the improved varieties introduced by Government.

almost universally referred to the arrival of cash crop maize as the major, if not only change, strongly associated with the introduction of the extension service, which was identified as being between ten and twenty years ago<sup>6</sup>. Kunda, <sup>a daughter of the first headman Chipanta,</sup> said the extension staff first came and demarcated people's land; later taught them how to plant seeds and apply fertilisers. She did not specify which crop or crops she was referring to, but was surprised it was not immediately obvious she meant maize. The general perception was that thereafter they had continued to do the same things, though longer-term maize farmers were aware that some aspects of recommended husbandry had changed over the past twenty years (concerning fertiliser application and plant spacing).

The expansion of maize production was associated explicitly with a simultaneous decline in the area under citemene fields. The major, negative consequence of the latter was a decline in levels of finger millet production. This crop (as will be more fully explained in later chapters) was critically important in social and economic relations, as the major constituent of village beers. With a general lowering of production, becoming acute in the 1980s, cash crop maize was in a sense becoming the alternative lynch pin of local agricultural economy (using economy in the widest sense).

These oral statements are supported by other, documentary, sources of evidence. A perusal of aerial photographs of Mabumba taken in 1966 and 1979 shows a marked increase in the number of small round gardens

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<sup>6</sup> An extension service has been in operation since the mid-1960s but in its present form it was introduced as part of local government reorganisation in 1981.



extending further into the surrounding bush (and an increase in village size over the thirteen year period, but without the appearance of any new villages). In the earlier photographs there are fewer, large gardens in the heavily wooded area, which has retreated further from Mabumba by 1979. The extent of cash maize farming appears not to have changed much during this period (the fields are recognisable because rectangular rather than round); most expansion has happened since the reorganisation of extension in 1981<sup>7</sup>. It is with this historical context of rapid and recent changes in agriculture in mind that I present the following account of the different production "systems".

#### Shifting Cultivation.

Walking south of chief Mabumba's, near the dambo margin, there are small maize gardens: early in March the crop is still green. This is hybrid and composite maize, being grown with inorganic fertilisers. The surrounding bush is denuded of all trees except the occasional musuku, and scrubby coppice regrowth.

Further from the village the fields become more varied: cassava intercropped with groundnuts or alone, small plots of beans; some fields mounded, others flat. On the flat fields many crops in mixture: cassava with pumpkins, maize, cucumbers, the occasional tomato.

More than an hour's walk from Mabumba we reach an area where tree growth is noticeably denser. Here, seven miles distant, are the

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<sup>7</sup> See chapter 7 for details of the expansion of maize farming in Mabumba.

nearest true fitemene (citemene, sing.) fields. I have come with my research assistant Abel and his brother-in-law (mulamu) Eliam, to see fields which they opened for their parents-in-law (bapongoshi). On the edge of this area is a small house, built entirely of grass, which belongs to a "grandfather" (MMB of the two men's wives). He lives here during the growing season, as the fields are now too far from the village to make daily trips. He is involved in productive activities, especially supervising the cutting of new areas and planting, but he is as much a guardian, setting traps for bush rats (batunga and impuku) which eat the cassava tubers, and which themselves are desirable relish. The denser forest here provides some access to bigger game too, so he spends much time hunting with his dog<sup>8</sup>. In the harvest season he will be scaring birds, and looking out for bush fires, and attempted thefts: people are jealous of each other's finger millet crops, with increasing shortages in the vicinity of Mabumba<sup>9</sup>.

The first field we visit was opened by Eliam in the previous dry season. He had organised a work party of a few milamu and friends to cut the branches with him. As payment his wife provided beer. Subsequently, she came with her sisters to stack and burn the branches. For this latter, no stranger labour was hired. Eliam explained to me that the quality of a finger millet crop depends on getting a good burn and plenty of ash, so the depth of the branch pile is important. As people are jealous of each other's crops, they prefer to retain strict personal control over stacking and burning.

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix 1. on hunting as a status activity.

<sup>9</sup> See chapter 4 on crop theft.

The field is typical for the first year of cropping: finger millet predominating, with some cassava, and scattered maize, pumpkins and tomatoes. Such a field is termed umunda (imiunda pl.), and strictly speaking the term refers only to the first year of a citemene cycle, though in practice the Ushi often use it to mean all field types in the first cycle of cassava production.

Eliam with his wife, Brenda, planted the cassava cuttings first, late in November, followed by broadcasting of finger millet in late December. Brenda has been harvesting pumpkin leaves, which she uses to make relish (munani) for Eliam; also local maize cobs, which are boiled and eaten as a snack vegetable. Later (May), she will harvest the ripe pumpkins, some to be cooked for Eliam and visitors (they have no children), others she will sell at Mabumba market. Shortly, when the rains end, Eliam will build a granary (ubutala) for the finger millet, and in June Brenda will recruit female assistance through the Roman Catholic church for the task of harvesting. She will pay them with fish obtained by exchanging cassava from her permanent gardens with Unga fishermen in the swamps of lake Bangweulu. In the second growing season Eliam will dig the soil between the cassava plants to make ridges (ukulima imputa), hiring labour for beer if necessary (this time Brenda will be able to use her own finger millet, instead of having to buy from others, as had been the case in the first year). Groundnuts (imbalala), and perhaps extra cassava cuttings, will be planted by Brenda on the ridges, and she will also harvest them, though Eliam may assist with digging up the groundnuts. I was told that groundnuts were favoured in the second year as they provided a good cover against weed invasion, which might otherwise seriously affect the development of cassava

tubers.

The field adjacent to the one we have examined is in its fourth year, the second year of cassava harvesting. It was opened by Abel, again as brideservice labour for the bapongoshi, in the year he married.

This year, the ridges between the cassava are planted to sweet potatoes (ifyumbu), cowpeas (ilandu), cucumbers (ifibimbi) and a local variety of aubergine (impwa), which will be harvested by Abel's wife. The remaining cassava tubers will be lifted this year.

Thereafter the field will enter another productive cycle, but as a cifuka (ififuka, pl. literally "rested land"). Any one field, opened originally as a munda, may be used for several cycles of cassava production, only being abandoned to the regeneration of bush after fifteen to twenty years. In the past, Abel said, a field would be kept for perhaps only half this time; lack of trees and increasing distances to be travelled from the village were the cause<sup>10</sup> of the change. It also used to be common to leave a fallow of at least one year before the next cassava crop (hence the term cifuka), but this too is becoming rarer.<sup>11</sup>

The particular ethnographic example described is perhaps typical of the citemene "system". Figure 1. compares the citemene sequence

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<sup>10</sup> Writing of chief Kalaba's, immediately to the north of Mabumba's, in 1960, George Kay reported that fields were rarely used for more than six or seven years (1964a, p. 36).

<sup>11</sup> Precise details of the calendar of agricultural activities and labour allocations by gender are represented diagrammatically in chapter 4.

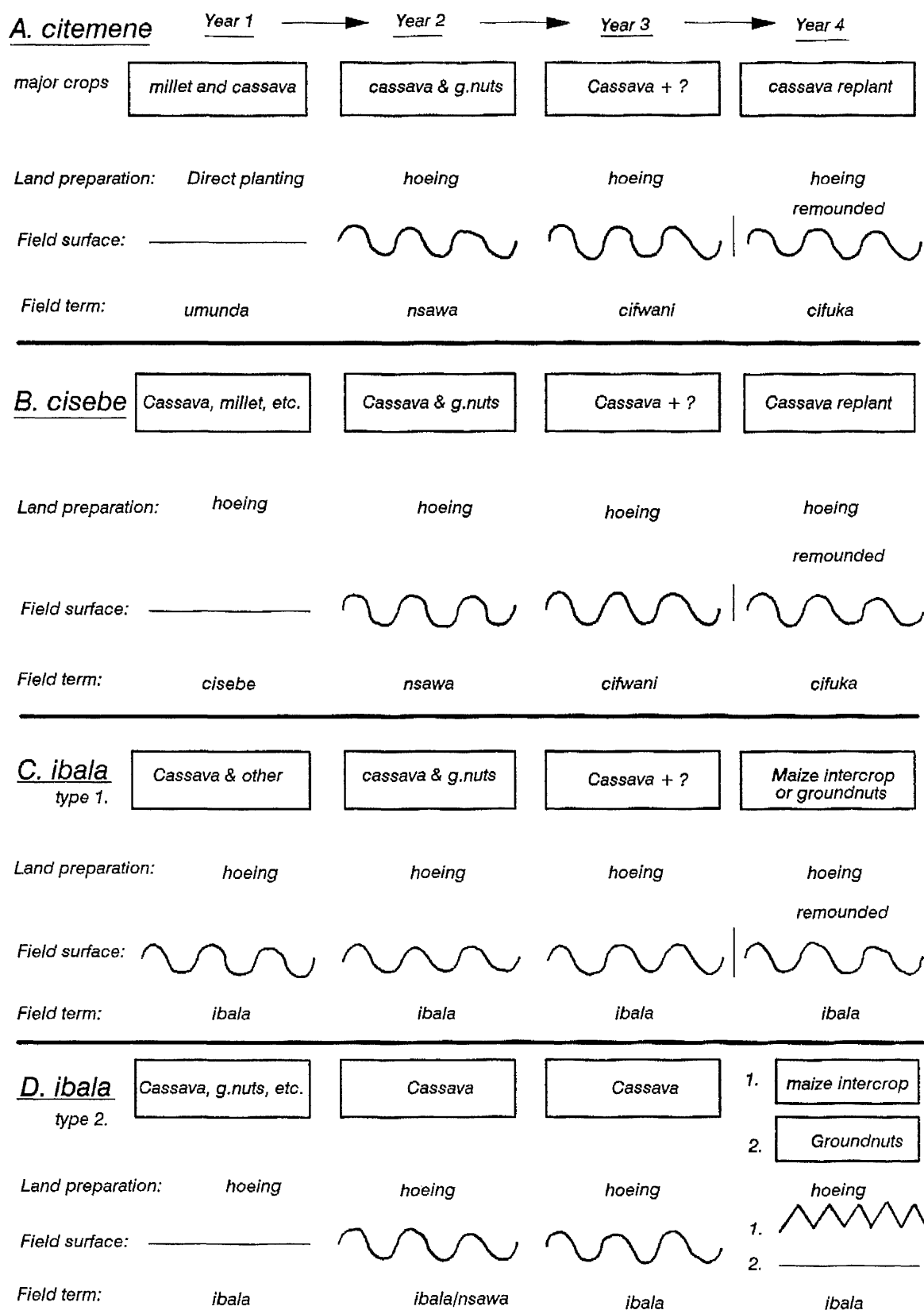
with those of other locally distinguished field types<sup>12</sup>. An important point the diagram illustrates is that field terms make distinctions by method and sequence of preparation, rather than according to the particular crops grown (e.g. nsawa refers specifically to a second year garden made by mounding of a field which was previously flat). In practice, a field term carries certain connotations of fertility and likely crop combinations; but the distinction between the different cycles illustrated is an analytical one; not necessarily a primary agroecological for Mabumba villagers. Usually, only citemene is treated as distinctive qua field sequence, and this is indicated by general use of imiunda to refer to any fields which are part of a sequence which began with branch burning<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> This diagram shows only the major crops characterising these sequences. In practice, a great many other minor crops can appear in a variety of positions; so the diagram should not be understood as indicating rigid "systems".

<sup>13</sup> Citemene is discriminated in this way because it is thought to have higher fertility than other forms of cropping (in the absence of artificial fertilisers). It is important in terms of descriptions of "farming systems" that the systematicity of such things as field sequences should not be an overinterpretation.

**Figure 1: field use cycles in Mabumba.**



Notes to figure 1.

Field surface types.

\_\_\_\_\_ = flat.

~~~~~ = mounded.

ΛΛΛΛΛ = ridged.

Cassava + ?, means cassava left as a sole crop or with small quantities of a large possible range of minor crops.

An ibala, of whatever type, becomes a cifuka when recultivated in a fifth year.

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Purposes of field sequences.

Citemene.

Citemene is distinctive, and an attractive form of cropping for two reasons. First, the initial burning has the effect of destroying most weed seeds. For the first year of crop growth there is no need to dig the surface, nor to do much, if any, weeding. Most labour is needed in the intense period of branch cutting (by men) from the mid to late dry season; little thereafter. Secondly, the umunda is thought the best medium for the growth of finger millet. This crop requires relatively high soil fertility, and suffers badly if there are many grass weeds present; "it is killed by grass", as one man put it.

What else is grown on fitemene is very variable, according to what the grower wants and the availability of seed. Because of the

perceived fertility of the seed bed, a greater variety of crops is found than in the other field sequences<sup>14</sup>. Generally, a producer will want as large a variety of crops as possible: the Ushi diet is fairly monotonous and anyone who is able to offer a more than average variety of relishes to dependents and guests will be in a socially advantageous position<sup>15</sup>.

#### Semi-permanent cultivation.

In the sense of repeated monocropping and bounded rotations, permanent cropping does not feature in Mabumba agriculture, other than in maize cash cropping. There are, however, several kinds of food crop fields which are categorised indigenously as separate from citemene cycles, and use land more intensively.

#### Ibala and cifuka.

The two types of ibala illustrated in figure 1. are prepared by the burning, during the dry season, of vegetation from an area which is either unwooded, or under citemene some years previously. They are distinguished from citemene, as are fisebe, as being "digging fields" (incende pa kutipa; lit. places of digging). Mabala of type 1. are most often prepared: mounding is specifically a technique to reduce weed competition through soil inversion. Type 2. fields are

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<sup>14</sup> In the first and second years the minor crops can include maize, cowpeas, pumpkins, bambaranuts, cucumbers, beans, sorghum, sweet potatoes (second year only), peas, pigeon peas, castor beans and vegetables (tomatoes, local aubergines, etc.).

<sup>15</sup> The possible range of crops that can be offered as food varies according to whether the producer is a man or a woman and what kinds of labour or goods they can obtain from others; issues raised in chapters 4 and 5.



prepared where the soil is thought fertile (especially on tracts of red and black soil), and several minor crops are included which simultaneously reduce the need to weed the cassava.

Mabala are the fields situated closest to the villages, and the rationale for their use is to maintain soil fertility over time as much as possible. Break crops, especially legumes such as groundnuts and beans, are included between cassava cycles as they are thought to improve soil quality. Ififuka, in contrast (whichever cycle they follow), are treated as staple reserve fields; they are already fairly exhausted, and thought good only for cassava, with perhaps a few sweet potatoes or groundnuts included here and there.

#### Cisebe.

Fisebe (cisebe, sing.) are spoken of as most nearly approximating the fertility (maka)<sup>16</sup> conditions of citemene. They are an interesting case in Mabumba as they are implicated in shifts in patterns of production which are at root to do with the decline in citemene and expansion of maize production.

The White Fathers' Bemba-English dictionary gives cisebe as "grass used as fertilizer". In practice, at least for the Ushi, this means the incorporation of vegetation into the soil when it is first dug and inverted, during, or at the end of, the rainy season, on sites with considerable grass cover.

The increased use of fisebe is largely connected with two crops:

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<sup>16</sup> Maka is most often glossed as strength or effort (e.g. Bemba Pocket Dictionary, p. 57). Emically it connotes potency/fertility in both human and agricultural spheres (see chapters 3 and 9).

finger millet and cash crop maize. The general opinion is that all crops commonly included in citemene cycles grow better there than in the various kinds of semi-permanent garden, which do not support an abundance of bush vegetation prior to cultivation. The point is most strongly made about finger millet, which in the absence of any ash performs at best poorly. With decreasing opportunities to use the citemene system, and bearing in mind that finger millet is only ever grown in the first season of a newly opened field, people increasingly are turning to the use of fisebe as a second-best option<sup>17</sup>. Given the great social importance of beer (see chapter 4), this move is being made by some in spite of the laboriousness of cultivating fisebe<sup>18</sup>. To dig through green vegetation from February to May is both very laborious and requiring work at a time which is otherwise relatively slack for the diggers (men), who are often then involved in non-agricultural activities (see appendix 1)<sup>19</sup>. Consequently, fisebe can only be expanded considerably by those

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<sup>17</sup> In a cropping patterns survey for 1986-87, for a randomly chosen sample of twelve households at different agricultural production levels (see later on ARPT for a critique of these categories) eight households were growing finger millet on both imiunda and fisebe, whilst the remaining four had only fisebe. The pooled number of fields for all households was twenty-five, of which nine were imiunda and sixteen fisebe.

<sup>18</sup> For others, fisebe represent an indirect route for access to finger millet, being used to grow maize some income from which goes to purchase the crop from the more remote bush dwellers who still subsist largely from citemene. See chapter 4 also on monetisation.

<sup>19</sup> This statement is supported quantitatively by ARPT's labour survey for Mabumba, 1986-87 (see figure 2, ch. 5). It is interesting as an aside here to mention that ARPT looks at apparent slackness in the system (diurnally and seasonally) in thinking about possible technical innovations. It is easy, though, to misinterpret the peaks and troughs of agricultural activity: it is precisely around March and April that men go off to engage in status activities such as hunting and (more recently) fish trading, and are unlikely, therefore, willingly to give up more time to agriculture.

having the resources to command much male labour.

Maize farms are most often opened on fisebe, or following the first sequence of cassava production in fisebe. The reason for this choice is that maize (of whatever type) is known to be demanding of fertility, and people are taught that they should only grow cash maize on good soils. A new maize farmer usually chooses a bush site that has not been used for some years, begins growing the crop on a fairly small area (about 0.25 ha) and expands at the edges in future years via new fisebe. Starting from these nuclei, maize farms represent the beginning of true permanent use of land in Mabumba.

Maize farms may also be started on mabala, but it is significant that field types are not usually named in relation to cash maize. Maize fields are simply referred to as farms (mafarms; mafamu) bracketing them off linguistically from identically prepared fields used for other crops<sup>20</sup>.

### Locations

#### 1. citemene

Describing Chief Kalaba's in 1960, Kay (1964a, p.29) asserted the Ushi had no land tenure in the European sense, with a shifting cultivation system operating in an area of abundant forest and low population density <sup>21</sup>. In principle, anyone could open fields where

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<sup>20</sup> The incorporation of the English term "farm" in relation to cash maize is part of a complex of values and attitudes tied up with its production, and will be referred to in passing throughout the thesis.

<sup>21</sup> 7.1 persons per sq.km. in 1963, rising to 8.4 by 1980 (Republic of Zambia, 1987, p.62).

they liked, so long as no one else was already using the land or leaving it under a short fallow. In 1988 little had changed except that distances to citemene areas from the main population centres had increased. There were no jural determinants of where people could open imiunda at the time of field work, though increasingly there were newcomers to Mabumba wishing to start maize farms who, as strangers, needed to be granted permission by the chief, as "owner" of the bush (mwine mpanga)<sup>22</sup>.

Are there other determinants of where people site their imiunda? Several informants said it was the custom to cut (ukutema) where close matrikin of ascending generations had previously done so <sup>23</sup>. Practically, it had become impossible in most cases to site citemene exactly where one's forebears had; with the increase in population concentration, the area which had once been woodland near the villages was now under semi-permanent cultivation. More generally, there is a tendency for matrilineally related people to choose to work near to each other (whether citemene or other forms of cultivation are at issue). Divorced mothers and unmarried sons will often have adjacent fields to make the logistics of cooperation easy (see chapters 3 and 4). More inclusively, it is common to find tracts of land which are said to "belong" to members of a particular

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<sup>22</sup> The changing jural determinants of land use in Mabumba are discussed in chapter 5. The chief would not normally be approached to ask for citemene land, except in the case of a dispute (see chapter 9), in part because there was no precedent to do so, but as much because he actively discouraged the practice. A fuller discussion is given in chapter 9.

<sup>23</sup> Woodland used two or more generations previously would have time to regenerate enough to be cut again (the minimum fallow period required is around thirty years, according both to villagers and ecological authorities such as Trapnell: 1953, p. 22).

clan (mukowa; see chapter 3 for definition). In spite of such kin influences, it is usual that "virgin" bush areas are first exploited by a single producer, and the primary criterion on which the choice of site rests is assessment of land fertility<sup>24</sup>. In Western discourse on fertility of land it has been usual to think in terms primarily of soil properties, and secondarily of plants as indicators of these properties. Among the Ushi, the criteria applied vary according to what kind of agricultural production is anticipated <sup>25</sup>.

In reference uniquely to citemene, there is a strikingly cohesive and shared body of information on selection of garden sites. What is most noticeable is that reference is made to characteristics of vegetation, and hardly ever to soil, at least not in itself. All informants told me first that an abundance of tall trees was their primary consideration. A wealth of vegetation indicates that the land is good, and will also provide plenty of ash when the branches are burned; ash being regarded as a primary component of fertility, especially for finger millet. One informant told me that the ash

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<sup>24</sup> For the time being I will discuss this notion of fertility along an agro-ecological dimension, though, as we shall see in chapter 9, there is more than one indigenous framework for understanding what leads to good crop growth.

<sup>25</sup> These criteria cannot be understood simply as different technical "variables" chosen as the most powerful indicators in a particular agro-ecological situation. As I will be arguing theoretically, there is not one "knowledge" of agricultural (and other) matters, but a series of "knowledges" which invest individuals and groups to different degrees, "knowledges" arising out of different sources, and which are inclusive of, but extend far beyond technical knowledge in production, in such a way as to make the delineation of a field (such as "indigenous technical knowledge") analytically and practically suspect.

removed the sourness (cimisha) from the soil.<sup>26</sup>

Beyond the amount of vegetation, people<sup>27</sup> cited particular tree (and grass) species as fertility indicators. Most often mentioned was the musuku tree (Uapaca kirkiana), along with munganunshi (Acacia polyacantha ssp. campylacantha). These trees are associated with a soil type, umushili uwafita (black soil), but it is significant that its fertility is thought to derive from its high content of organic matter (indicating past productivity) rather than any intrinsic property of the soil. One man told me that good sites for citemene were those where the soil felt springy under one's feet, indicating large amounts of mufundo (translated variously as compost, manure, and now also synonymous with inorganic, chemical fertilisers). The comments about musuku and munganunshi applied to semi-permanent gardens (cisebe, and ibala) as much as to citemene, these trees occurring most commonly in quite open land along the boundaries of dambos (ilungu), where general tree cover would be too sparse for citemene.

A number of other tree species were cited as indicating that a place was not suitable for crop growing under citemene (that is, apart from a general dearth of vegetation). These were mpundu (Parinari curatellifolia), mupapa (Afzelia quanzensis), kapempe (Hymenocardia acida/ulmoides), mubanga (Pericopsis angolensis), mutondo

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<sup>26</sup> The term cimisha is most often used in relation to stomach acidity. It is probably not insignificant that ash (mito) is added to the millet beer katubi when it is becoming sour, to give it a sweeter taste.

<sup>27</sup> "People" here is inclusive of all informants who discussed citemene with me, regardless of age or sex.

(Julbernardia paniculata)<sup>28</sup> and muputu (Brachystegia spiciformis).

It is likely this knowledge is shared over a wide area of Luapula province, as locally the woodland is fairly uniform, dominated by various Julbernardia species: the Zambia Forest Department(1979) report kapempe and muputu as being locally dominant on infertile rocky hillsides (of which there are none in chief Mabumba's, and very few in Ushi country), and the other species cited are noted for their occurrence in the very acid and infertile soils around lakes Bangweulu and Mweru and in the Luapula valley.

#### Indigenous soils classification.

Whereas there is evidence of a shared body of knowledge concerning vegetational indicators of soil fertility, I found that knowledge of properties inherent to soils was quite particularistic, and referred to semi-permanent and permanent forms of cropping, especially of maize. Broadly, these observations are in agreement with Audrey Richards', fifty years previously.

"My evidence, admittedly inadequate on this point, would be that most Bemba, young or old, can select forest that will produce sufficient ash for a millet garden but that soil selection in a rudimentary form is only practised by some of the older and more efficient cultivators, whose knowledge is acquired through experience."

(Richards, A.I., 1939, p.287).

My findings differ in that age did not seem to be a major factor in knowledge about soils. Rather, it was those (mostly men) who were involved in cash maize farming and having contact with state institutions who tended to show active interest in and knowledge of particular soil types.

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Trapnell (1953, p.15) described Julbernardia paniculata as an indicator of poor soil fertility if dominant in local vegetation.

In reviewing the agricultural systems of northern Zambia in the 1930s, Trapnell (1937, p.8) suggested, in comparison with the Western part of the country, that soil classifications were unelaborate because the production of ash in a shifting cultivation system tended to cancel out the relatively small differences in fertility between largely uniform plateau soils. The argument tends to functionalism, but in examining historical shifts in agricultural practices it is worth considering that past criteria for selecting land may no longer be useful, and that sources of "new" knowledge may be rather different, given increasing state involvement in the rural areas since independence. I wish to characterise the agricultural situation in Mabumba in the 1980s as one of considerable flux. Pressure to use land more intensively, both self-realised and expressed through authorities (such as the chief and extension service), concomitant with the rapid expansion of cash maize farming, has produced a situation where equilibria are changing. Interest in soil properties has emerged because people are experimenting with new ways to grow crops (as in the earlier example with finger millet) where the older certainties of citemene are no longer sustainable. In this state of uncertainty, the Department of Agriculture is inserting itself as a voice of authority on soil.

#### Soil types.

Given the limited development of interest in soil properties (some people appeared to have little interest in it beyond the generic term umushili), the following is a tentative soil taxonomy which presents four descriptive categories which were in common use, though very variously described by different informants.



### 1. Umushili uwamucanga (sandy soil)

Mucanga is the predominant soil type in the vicinity of chief Mabumba's village, ranging from Kasanga in the west to Chisongo in the east (see map 2. Appendix 4.). The term refers to texture, and is almost synonymous with English, mucanga meaning sand as found at the lake or river shore. It is also characterised as being grey to whitish in colour.

In most terms mucanga is not thought of favourably in agriculture, producing rather poor yields of everything except cassava and sweet potatoes, which can make large tubers in mucanga (but cassava is thought to do well on almost all soils except those exhausted by previous cropping). It is liked for being easily workable, but its related property of being very free draining is generally viewed negatively: in drought periods during the rainy season, which are common but unpredictable, crops planted in mucanga will suffer more than those elsewhere, especially maize, which wilts quickly.

Relative lack of fertility is likewise highlighted by reference to local maize. In semi-permanent fields the crop does very poorly unless some artificial fertiliser is added, whereas other soil types (notably fita) will support a reasonable maize crop for a year or two without fertiliser.

The last point about maize needs a little elaboration, as there were two contexts in which its relation to mucanga soil were discussed. The second was that of cash cropping hybrid and composite varieties. The complaints about the effects of drought remained unchanged, but fertility was thought of differently. When questioned on this kind of maize production, most informants were of the opinion that mucanga

was a good soil: land preparation involves both digging and making ridges and so ease of working the soil is given priority. Fertility is taken care of by the package of government inputs, which includes inorganic fertiliser: this kind of maize is not thought of outside the context it is manifested in by government institutions.

In a number of cases people made the distinction between large-grained sand (uwamucanga unono) and small-grained (uwamucanga uwakalamba)<sup>29</sup>, the former being virtually useless for agricultural purposes, and described as umushili ushakwa maka (soil which has no strength)<sup>30</sup>.

## 2. Umushili uwafita.

Further to <sup>(previous)</sup> comments, this soil is generally regarded as the most fertile to be found in the vicinity of Mabumba, especially for groundnuts and cassava. It is noted that it will support good yields for several years without the application of fertiliser, though for fewer seasons in the case of maize.

A related soil was identified by some informants, occurring mainly where the black dambo soils grade into surrounding soil types: grey soil (umushili uwabutuluka). The term is not used as consistently as would be expected in a Western soil classification, though. Soil types which might be regarded as unrelated may also be called

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<sup>29</sup> The root terms -nono and -kalamba tend to be glossed as "little" and "big", respectively. In this context they mean "less" and "more" in terms of importance/extent of use/usefulness. They do not refer to the size of the soil grains. As will be discussed in chapter 3., these terms are of general linguistic significance for the Ushi as ..kalamba also denotes seniority allied with social importance (and ..nono the inverse qualities).

<sup>30</sup> See note 16.

uwabutuluka, simply on the basis of colour (the darker uwamucanga was so called by some).

### 3. Umushili uwacikandashi/uwakakandashi.

Cikandashi is a soil whose recognition depends on texture, rather than colour; indeed reported colours ranged from brown through grey to whitish. Its texture is defined either positively by saying that it contains clay (ibumba) or negatively as soil which does not contain sand (umushili ushakwata mucanga). It is said to occur locally in one part of the chiefdom. Reports of its properties are varied; some say it would support crops well for several seasons without the need to add fertiliser, even for maize, whilst others say it would be exhausted after two years of maize and would have to be abandoned. It is known to retain water well so is advantageous in times of drought, but on the other hand it dries to form a very hard crust, making it difficult to work, and when wet it adheres to the hoe, which has regularly to be cleaned. On the whole cikandashi is not liked.

### 4. Umushili uwankundwe.

Nkundwe, red soil, is regarded as the best soil for semi-permanent cultivation, though it is not found in the immediate vicinity of Mabumba.<sup>31</sup> Its occurrence in the chiefdom coincides with the location of the local primary cooperative societies and the most

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<sup>31</sup> High regard for red soil was found by Audrey Richards in the Bemba case (1939, ch. 14).

intensive cash maize production.<sup>32</sup> The fertility of nkundwe is considered on a par with fita, though it is generally a more extensive soil type, and it is favoured for all crops. The texture lies somewhere between that of mucanga and of cikandashi, and people say it is better than the latter because it is not sticky when wet, nor does it dry to form a hard crust. Significantly, people who had contact with the extension service, or who had much formal education, often used the English term "loam soil" when I asked them to describe nkundwe.

A few other soil types were described according to criteria other than colour or texture. One such is termite hill soil (umushili uwakuculu), singled out for identification because it is a very fertile site for mabala<sup>33</sup>. Likewise, umushili uwacipya is a Bemba term meaning soil found in cipya (a kind of open woodland).

It can be seen that classifications are made according to a number of criteria, and there is considerable overlap between categories. The four major types or groups cannot be regarded as a systematic typology in the sense of a Western soils classification. More to the point for my discussion, though, is that recognition of soils has to be distinguished from active use of soils knowledge for agricultural decisions.

In spite of frequent statements that fita and nkundwe soils were the best for cropping, I came across very few examples of people who had

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<sup>32</sup> There is no evidence, however, that the siting of these societies was connected directly with the soil.

<sup>33</sup> Ingesting of the soil by termites appears to improve both its texture and fertility.

gone out of their way to open fields according to soil type. One man, a member of the Watchtower movement (Jehovah's Witnesses), had opened several mabala at a site more than half an hour's walk from the chief's village, specifically because good grey soil (umushili uwabutuluka) was available there. He was exceptional, and was noted in the village as a very industrious person, both in farming and in the affairs of his church.

Among those not growing cash maize, and having no contact with extension education, there was little evidence of active selection of soils for semi-permanent field sites. Sometimes vegetation indicators were mentioned (less commonly than for citemene: the area of semi-permanent cultivation is already fairly denuded of tree species), but most often these informants said the quality of land could only be judged retrospectively from how well crops grew there. In turning more to the use of semi-permanent fields, some were being actively experimental, as in the case of a woman who would plant a particular crop on a small area in one year, then expand the field in the next if the harvest was good.

The same general vagueness applies to those cash maize producers who have begun to participate in the enterprise through trial and error. Thus another woman told me that God (lesa) alone told her where to start a maize "farm".

A rather different set of observations comes from those maize farmers who had received some formal instruction in procedures<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> From the government extension service, various donor funded projects, and other villagers who have already been trained; see chapters 6 and 7.

"For maize, you should use loam soil, and not plant it in very sandy areas." (English).

"If you plant maize in sandy soil, then the next year you should plant something else there." (CiBemba).

"I make rotations (marotation) with maize and cassava because cassava improves the soil and gives good germination in maize." (CiBemba).

Some of the most commercialised farmers talked about soil types in relation to very new crops (soya beans grow well on cikandashi according to one man), or even crops which have not been grown in Mabumba (such as wheat, which was said by another man to grow well on fita)<sup>35</sup>. Rotation (marotation) was most often mentioned by people who had hosted extension demonstrations on their land, or who were trial farmers for a rotation trial in progress with ARPT. One woman said that she was practising a form of rotation on her main fields by alternating particular crops between mabala and fitemene; another, that she alternated mabala plots of beans with either maize or groundnuts because "if you plant the same crop in the same place for many years the soil becomes exhausted", and a man stated that:

"Before I was involved in growing maize with ARPT I had no idea of how to choose soils. I just looked at how well the plants grew in the first year. Now I have learnt which soils are the best ones".<sup>36</sup>

One has to take care not to overstate the case; for any one of these individuals a number of influences bear on their knowledge of and attitudes toward soil and soil use, not least of which would be personal experience, some people being more experimental than others.

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<sup>35</sup> This observation may have been connected with ARPT's dambo trials, where a number of cereal crops were being tested.

<sup>36</sup> Both these individuals had been involved with the activities of ARPT for several years, and were regarded by them as two of the most astute and cooperative of the trials farmers.

The comment about rotating maize with cassava is a germane example. The notion of rotation, expressed in an English word by a non-English speaker suggests strongly the influence of extension personnel (rotation was a common theme I heard addressed to village meetings by the Agricultural Assistant), but, the particular rotation suggested is nowhere to be found in extension recommendations, and arose from the farmer's observations in his own fields. What these informants were doing was to reiterate knowledge some of which clearly could not have been derived from experience, and to reinterpret their existing practices through exotic concepts such as rotation<sup>37</sup>. This is one indication of agricultural knowledge in Mabumba being differentiated between groups of people. To make the point more strongly, and to begin to show how distinctive cash maize is, I now devote some space to the "technical" context of its production, anticipating consideration of social differentiation among maize farmers and between maize farmers and others in later chapters.

#### Cash maize farming.

All cash maize farmers depend on a package of inputs supplied by the state, since the state is monopoly supplier of both seeds and fertilisers<sup>38</sup>. External dependence for both these inputs devolves in

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<sup>37</sup> An important point, to be considered more fully in chapter 10, is that whilst a set of practices might be interpretable as rotation, such an interpretation may misconstrue the rationale behind observable patterns; requirements for certain crops in particular years, and the division of labour between household members may shape the patterns as much as any directly agroecological consideration.

<sup>38</sup> Dependence may be differentiated according to whether the farmer has capital to buy inputs or needs loans. Such economic differentiation is discussed in later chapters.

a technical sense from the nature of the maize which is to be grown as a cash crop. The basis for Zambia's promotion of maize cash cropping is to improve rural standards of living and aim for food self-sufficiency, requiring increased production and uniform quality (for mechanised processing on a large scale uniformity in the raw product is important, and urban tastes in food demand it). The maize varieties which have been bred within the country to meet these needs are "daughters" of the green revolution elsewhere, and are high yielding, but only under favourable environmental conditions. A glance at a field where someone ran out of fertiliser makes it all too clear how necessary it is for these kinds of maize.

It might seem less obvious why people do not reuse seed from their own crops. The institutional reason is to do with productivity and uniformity, and relates to plant genetics. With the exception of some recent composite (open-pollinated) cultivars, most of the maize supplied by Zamseed through the co-ops is hybrid and can only be planted for one generation. Subsequent crops would produce much lower yields with variable grain size and properties.<sup>39</sup> Extension staff strongly discourage the use of farmers' own seed, except for the composite varieties. In practice, a few farmers do try planting hybrid seed, but they are almost invariably disappointed by the result and return to purchasing seed.

Even assuming that prospective maize growers obtain all of the

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<sup>39</sup> Hybrid maize varieties are produced by crossing two or more highly inbred lines. If the hybrid so produced self-pollinates genetic segregation occurs and in subsequent generations the characteristics of the hybrid are lost to varying degrees and the population of plants becomes more varied with respect to yield and other traits.



package of inputs required<sup>40</sup>, the business of growing the crop is perceived to be "difficult" (ni bwafya), "hard work" and requiring considerable discipline<sup>41</sup>. Initially, land preparation requires both digging and the making of ridges (the latter before planting or after emergence), whose dimensions are closely specified by the extension staff. Planting must be as near to the onset of the rains as possible; for most varieties there is a leeway for planting of less than one month (too early will mean the seedlings will die because of erratic rainfall; too late and yields will decline dramatically through plant maturation not matching environmental conditions). Once planted, at fixed spacings taught by extension, the seeds require two applications of fertiliser (basal and top-dressing) at specific growth stages. Then, through the growing season (from December to April), several weeding may be necessary (and weeds tend to be rife, with plenty of light and fertiliser available).

Harvesting begins in May, and can last until September. During June it becomes the most time consuming of all agricultural activities for men, and women's involvement is also considerable (ARPT, Labour Survey, Mabumba, 1986-87; see diagrams in chapter 4). Once harvested, the cobs have to be stored until they are sufficiently dry to be shelled. Shelling is most often by hand, though rudimentary

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<sup>40</sup> It is very often the case that not all inputs are received; or at least not at the right time, because of inefficiencies in the running of the provincial co-operative union.

<sup>41</sup> As will be discussed in chapter 6, this perception has ideological as well as practical connotations.

shelling platforms<sup>42</sup> have been developed locally. These, however, frequently do not work well (Abel abandoned his and went back to hand shelling). The job is slow and laborious.

The shelled maize must be packed into grain bags holding 90kg each. These bags have to be obtained from the provincial Co-operative Union through the primary co-ops, and are usually both late and in short supply. Thereafter delays in paying farmers for their crops happen every year.

Even assuming all these conditions can be met, all farmers are subject to the vagaries of the weather, which affect cash maize more than any other crop in Mabumba. In the 1987-88 season there was a prolonged drought in late February, and yields were generally much lower than expected. Many people feared financial hardship in the forthcoming year.

In summary, then, cash maize growing is a much more controlled business, both in terms of the grower's activities and external influences on those activities, than the other kinds of agricultural production I have been describing. The wider societal and conceptual significance of this control I shall pursue in later chapters; but its material basis should not be forgotten. Because of what hybrid maize is, in a very real sense the farmer must conform to the "official" set of practices, if he or she is to be a successful farmer, with all the consequences that flow from being such.

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<sup>42</sup>

The platform icipaka consists of a horizontal grid of sticks supported over a pit. The cobs are placed on the grid, beaten with sticks, and the grain falls through into the pit.

A new activity: vegetable production.

One area of agricultural production remains to be outlined, a recent and rapidly expanding activity in Mabumba.

Though vegetables (and by this I mean introduced, "European" vegetables) have for a considerable time been included as minor crops in imiunda, and planted occasionally during the dry season along stream banks, what has begun in the last five years in the chief's village approximates a form of market gardening. Various influences have played a part.

To begin with, ARPT began a series of cropping trials on the Chansunsu dambo adjacent to the chief's village (1986), to investigate the potential of the perennially wet areas for dry season crop production. The motivations were twofold. First, that nutrition studies had noted deficiencies of vitamins and minerals during the dry season. Secondly, in concert with chief Mabumba, there was a desire to find new cash-earning possibilities during the dry season as an alternative to cutting citemene<sup>43</sup>. The field programme was to include cereals, root crops and a number of vegetables. As part of the wider concern to "include women in the process of development", ARPT approached a village women's club to see if they would be interested in co-operative vegetable growing. The group readily agreed, under the supervision of one of the long-established trials farmers.

In 1987 the new Agricultural Assistant (AA) in Mabumba opened his own

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Dry season cropping coincides with the most intensive activity in preparing citemene gardens.

vegetable garden on the side of the dambo nearest the village. People were impressed by his crops of tomatoes, cabbages, Chinese leaves and rape. A number of other people followed suit, notably groups of young unmarried men<sup>44</sup>. At about the same time a new basic secondary school was started on the abandoned site of the Chinese road camp, generating a large demand for local produce.

When asked about their interest in producing vegetables, most of the growers told me that it was a new source of cash which needed work at a relatively slack time of year, as well as being a source of relish over a period when only dried vegetable leaves were usually available.

With very few exceptions, those who had entered this form of vegetable growing were already producing cash crop maize; indeed, there were a number of parallels with maize farming. Cultivation on perennially wet grassland was an entirely new experience, and practices were being copied directly from the AA and the women in the ARPT trials: these vegetables were all grown using inorganic fertilisers (for the independent growers leftovers from maize production were used; the women's club were supplied with inputs) and, in many cases, pesticides and fungicides as well (indeed, cabbages and rape grown without pesticides were badly attacked by insects). The seeds could not be obtained locally, but had to be purchased from one of three sources in Mansa: Namboard (National Agricultural Marketing Board), an Asian's shop, or the Roman Catholic mission.

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<sup>44</sup> See chapters 3 and following on this particular group of people.

At the time of field work relatively few people had taken up this form of agricultural production; perhaps twenty in the women's club and twenty others (though this number had quadrupled over the previous year)<sup>45</sup>. Although, like maize farming, it was perceived as hard work, requiring removal of turf, preparation of raised beds, starting of seedlings in nurseries and later transplanting, with the incentive of an unsaturated local market where prices similar to those in Mansa could be charged (and relatively easy access to Mansa along a tarred road) vegetable production in Mabumba looked set to expand considerably.<sup>46</sup>

#### Livestock.

The Ushi have been, and continue to be a predominantly agricultural, as opposed to pastoral people. However, livestock is an area in which the institutions of agricultural development have begun to intervene, and there is already some differentiation in the community to do with this intervention. In some senses the situation parallels the comparison of cash crop maize production with other forms of cropping, so here I wish to compare existing livestock husbandry with some of the new initiatives coming from the development institutions.

Around the main villages in Mabumba chiefdom it is rare to see stock other than chickens, which are left to fend for themselves, and are

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<sup>45</sup> It should be noted that this form of production had become established only in the chief's village and one or two of the other main road villages. Elsewhere in the chiefdom it was not seen.

<sup>46</sup> Some disquiet has been voiced within ARPT about the wisdom of applying large quantities of agrochemicals where they will find their way very quickly into ground water. The ecological consequences have yet to be seen.

eaten occasionally within the household, sold, or given as prestige gifts (for example, when an important relative is visiting or being visited)<sup>47</sup>. A few of the older boys keep rabbits and guinea pigs, which they have learnt about at school; on the whole these are regarded as a curiosity, an amusement for the children which might earn them a little money from time to time.

Goats are not found in the main villages; not that people do not know how to keep them, but they are a liability, with a main road nearby and most of the maize fields unprotected. In the remoter villages, especially those near the Mansa river, (where little cash maize is grown) there are both goats and sheep, though not in large numbers. Here also small herds of cattle are found grazing the dambo grasses, usually in the charge of a son or nephew of the owner. These cattle mostly are owned by village headmen, and indeed the chief's herd of about fifteen head are kept for him in this area.

In 1960 Kay reported only chief Kalaba himself as owning cattle (1964a, p.33) in his village, and that the animals were used to make special gifts to the villagers and honoured visitors, though one animal was slaughtered for sale in Mansa<sup>48</sup> (op. cit. p.34).

In Mabumba in 1988 village headmen and the chief still rarely slaughtered cattle, but when they did the accent had shifted to selling for cash, and news would spread that so-and-so was about to

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<sup>47</sup> Chickens were interesting in that they seemed a rare example of a household resource which was equally the responsibility of all household members. However, when it came to disposal, the decision lay with the household head, whether a man or a woman.

<sup>48</sup> Known prior to Independence as Fort Rosebery.

slaughter one of his cattle (cattle are all owned by men). On occasion the meat would be brought to Mabumba market for sale, as happened with one of the chief's animals, which was sold at a price similar to what might be found in Mansa butcheries: K25 per (estimated) kg. I did not come across cases of cattle meat being given by the owners as gifts, though the chief had promised one animal for a celebration of his twenty-one years as chief, scheduled to happen shortly after my departure from the village.

As well as headmen, I found a small group of cattle keepers who had entered herding quite recently, the largest and oldest of these herds originating in 1975. These were all men who had set up hamlets away from the main villages where they wanted to start cattle production as a business. The large herd, consisting of about one hundred head, belonged to Winston, who had owned a store in Chisongo, but had moved the business to Mansa in 1970 to get more custom. In 1988 his store was a successful general haberdasher's and grocery, selling cloth brought from the Copperbelt. After establishing the cattle farm he put his sister in charge, when she was deserted by her husband. Other siblings and nephews went there too, to settle as citemene cutters. The sister was given financial help for managing the farm (cattle and citemene) and some of the residents were boys employed to herd the cattle on a permanent basis, who were not themselves relatives<sup>49</sup>. In 1988 two animals were slaughtered and sold to Mansa butchery, and a few others were sold to the other "business" cattle owners in the area who were trying to expand their enterprises.

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<sup>49</sup> This case of permanent hired labour was exceptional in Mabumba. All Cropping labour was hired on a casual basis. See chapter 4 on labour.

One man, Crispine, who had bought cattle from Winston, had a herd of fifteen in 1988, with five years of experience behind him. His initial interest had come from the money potential of selling meat in Mansa, and he was able to start buying animals with help from an older brother, who like Winston owns a store in Mansa, and his younger brother, a notable maize farmer with his own hammer mill, also has given him some financial support.

Crispine had received no formal training when he began cattle keeping in 1983, but since has discussed problems with the extension staff, and listens to farmers' programmes in CiBemba on his radio. He wanted to continue learning and was of the opinion that extension knew more about cattle than the villagers because it was not a traditional Ushi activity (ulutambi). The keeping of a few animals by some headmen and the chief did not seem to figure in his discussion. The only problem he had to report was a skin disease on his animals known locally as fincupa or senkobo, for which he had obtained "medicine" from the Veterinary Department in Mansa.

It is the District Agricultural Officer (DAO) who is responsible for responding to technical problems in livestock production, and it is interesting that on his district tour of 1988 he was taken to visit Winston's herd, by the local AA, when in Mabumba. He was shown fincupa, made his own provisional diagnosis and referred Winston to the Veterinary Department. The fact that Winston was visited rather than any other cattle owner reflected his high visibility in the AA's eyes, not least because he had actively sought advice from extension. In discussions with me about cattle the extension staff never made reference to the small herds belonging to headmen.



Chickens, similarly, were distinguished according to institutional connections. When asked casually about chicken keeping, Crispine immediately answered with the question "which kind of chickens do you mean?". By this he meant village chickens or the chickens which were bred at the Farm Institute (inkoko ya Farm Institute). His opinion was that the village way of keeping chickens was appropriate to that particular kind of chicken. The new chickens from the Farm Institute could grow very big, but needed to be raised on special chicken feed, which was expensive. He did not know how to raise these chickens himself, though he said some of the women in chief Mabumba's village had already learned and were keeping some. He also said that he and other villagers would like to learn about egg production, as there is a growing taste for eggs, but they were expensive in Mansa<sup>50</sup>. The idea of producing eggs for their own sake, as household comestibles and items for sale at the market (with an eye to pupils at the secondary school and passing traffic) was very much tied up with Farm Institute chickens and production advice from extension. Though on occasion I came across village chicken eggs being eaten, in general they were all retained for hatching because of a high mortality rate among the chicks.

#### Oxen.

Oxenisation has become a popular theme in development thought on rural Africa: as a means to expanding production capacity without reliance on expensive capital equipment such as tractors. The use of

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<sup>50</sup> Here there seems to be a shift of dietary preference in line with urban tastes: in 1960 Kay reported a positive aversion to eggs (1964a, p.33).

oxen for ploughing and carting in Mabumba is a new phenomenon (of the past five years), and one tied to institutional schemes. In the eastern part of the chiefdom in 1988 there were perhaps ten owners of oxen and ox carts; in the chief's village there was only one, a secondary school teacher. However, these few owners were already hiring out their equipment to others.

Schemes for training people to use oxen were being run at Lubwe on lake Bangweulu, by the Extension Branch and the Family Farming Scheme of the Roman Catholic church (an issue taken up in chapter 8). So far, use of oxen has grown entirely out of institutional intervention and access to oxen has been determined by an individual's (in nearly all cases a man's) prior involvement in cash maize production. The criterion for choosing someone for a training scheme has been that he is growing a sufficiently large area of maize (of the order of several hectares) to make ox ploughing economical.

Even with such a recent scheme, those most "progressive" farmers in Mabumba were beginning to see oxen as a new priority, and several claims were pressed on me for access to training schemes, in my apparent guise of someone working for Agriculture<sup>51</sup>. It would be appropriate to see oxenisation as a further refinement of an already heavily institutionalised aspect of agriculture in Mabumba.

### Summary

This chapter has attempted to outline the state of agriculture in

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<sup>51</sup> The English word "Agriculture" was used as a catch all term for institutions working with agriculture, though most often it was used to refer to the resident extension staff.

Mabumba in the late 1980s. In a sense it is a period of turmoil: older, certain methods of production (citemene) are having to be supplemented with other more permanent land uses, as the population has become concentrated at certain nodes and constrained from settling more freely in the bush (a theme for chapter 9).

Into this situation of rapid change the activities of government institutions have been inserted, creating new channels to resources. Thus, maize farming provides cash which can make good failing finger millet production, and is being adopted very rapidly. As importantly, it has technical and cultural associations which link it with other practices originating outside the village: vegetable growing and specific forms of livestock husbandry. Such associations extend beyond agriculture into other areas of production, which are detailed in appendix 1. The associative link has often been described as an urban ideology (e.g. Hedlund, 1984, pp. 231-233). Whilst this observation is of empirical value, it does not adequately address the mechanisms through which such an ideology becomes effective (and affective). Why is it, as seems the case in this chapter, that some of the practices of external origin are talked of in such a way as to parenthesise them from similar activities of indigenous origin? What is it that leads some people into maize production, and not others? There must be dimensions other than the technical which need exploring.

The first stage of this exploration is to consider more closely the social context of production. Already I have hinted in examples at the significance of certain associations (cooperation of brothers-in-law providing brideservice). The next three chapters analyse

agricultural production in social context, and move on to consider its connection with distributive processes.

### Chapter 3: Mabumba kinship and residence.

My intention in this chapter is to introduce kinship as one important element in the organisation of Mabumba economic life. I will show how it is portrayed emically as central to economic relations, without yet complicating the picture with historical analysis (the interplay of the cash economy and Zambian state with the village). The argument will broaden into these other issues in the next two chapters. Here I restrict myself to what kinship means in terms of the putative content of kin relations.

Secondly, through case study material, I analyse the residential distribution of Mabumba villagers, and in so doing explore the degree and senses in which kinship has consequences for where people live, and, subsequently, for their economic opportunities. Implicitly this is to pose questions of earlier ethnographies of the region which gave to kinship an overdeterminate position in village life<sup>1</sup>.

In a sense I am locating my actors in a social and geographical space, in anticipation of looking at what they actually do. I justify making this separation on both analytical and empirical grounds: kinship is an explicit subject in discussions of how people should behave, in terms of the categories and principles which I am about to elaborate, but is complexly related to how they actually behave.

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<sup>1</sup> Cunnison's classic monograph on the Luapula valley (1959), for example, is organised explicitly as a discussion of kinship and social structure. My informants described kin terms as being relevant to the Ushi tribe (mutundu) as a whole, now coterminous with inhabitants of the area circumscribed by the colonial government as the Ushi Native Authority. Mabumba and Ushi should thus be understood as coterminous in the context of this chapter.

Posing new questions of kinship.

The role of kinship as an organising principle in production has featured strongly in Zambian ethnographies since the late 1970s. Both Poewe and Crehan (on the Lunda and Kaonde, respectively) have examined the relations between the village and the wider economy; in the village kinship remains an important idiom for the organisation of production, but in the context of a capitalist national economy into which the village is progressively inserted. A major aim of such analyses was to break out of the tradition of treating the village as a sovereign realm, governed by indigenous institutions, not articulating in any substantial way with the nation state or the world economic system.

Crehan asked:

"...what kind of entities, in the sense of groups sharing a particular economic position vis à vis the means of production, are created by a system in which the organising principle of the relations of production is kinship, and what are the implications of the fact that such a system, or what remains of it, exists within a wider capitalist-based reality?"

(Crehan, 1987, Abstract).

Both authors were writing about societies which reckon descent in the matrilineal line, and Poewe elaborates this principle into the major structural feature of local political economy; as a particular logic for the production and distribution of resources, for which there is a contradictory relationship between the forces and relations of production (productive individualism mixed with distributive communalism, 1981, pp. 15-17): the matrilineal paradox (discussed, for example, by Douglas, M., 1971). This contradiction is seen by Poewe as heightened in an increasingly capitalistic economy (the logic of capitalism being an accumulative one, for the production of

surplus and exchange value, as against matriliney which produces and distributes use values for the enhancement and maintenance of status). The outcome of increasing contradiction is identified in incipient processes of class formation: that people occupying distinct positions in relation to the means of production respond differently so that, for example, resource poor female-headed households like to remain staunch matrilinealists, whilst businessmen have tended to adopt Protestant ideologies which justify the accumulation of resources within nuclear families and minimise the strength of ties to matrikin (1981, ch.4).

A critique of the relations between matriliney and capitalism, and how other writers have approached the "problem", will be made at various points through the rest of this thesis. I begin with Ushi kinship terminology, and how this can be said to express a "matrilineal ideology".

#### Ushi kinship terminology

Rather than list extensively all kin terms used by the Ushi, it will be more relevant to my arguments to describe the major categories and principles operating, which have some bearing on the organisation of production and distribution<sup>2</sup>. In agreement with Crehan (1987, p. 146), I feel that literal translation of indigenous terms leads only to confusion, not least because they express relationship at the level of the clan (mukowa) or lineage (cikota), which it is hard to make sense of in terms of a genealogical "tree" showing biological

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<sup>2</sup> Those terms which will reappear in later chapters are indicated by bold print.

kinship (categories of relations make sense only in relational terms by thinking of more than one generation at once). Like Crehan (op. cit. p. 151), what I am trying to do here is to present the logic of the kinship system through the core categories, to show that kinship does indeed articulate with political economy.

#### General principles.

There are three major and overriding principles in the Ushi kinship system, which are the same as for the Luapula Lunda, and possibly other matrilineal peoples in Zambia. First, for any ego all kin will be classified either as senior or junior; and respect for seniority is customarily an important aspect of relationships. In any social encounter it may be possible to address the other person with a term that specifies relative seniority. When I discuss the various kin terms I will show how the seniority principle would be applied.

Secondly, and relatedly, junior kin become senior kin by succeeding to the positions of the latter (ukupyana). Membership of a particular kin category expresses a certain type of social position and identity relative to incumbents of other kinship categories, and the structure of social positions is superordinate to the particular individuals who move through that structure during their lifetimes. Thirdly, a differentiation is made between matrikin and affines; the two types of relation have significances which vary according to context and stage of the household development cycle. As we shall see, there is considerable potential for conflict between the demands of matrikin and affines. Since matriliney is spoken of as the most important principle of kinship (and an emic point of comparison with, say, the Lozi), I begin with matrilineal categories of relation, and



the most inclusive group, the clan.

The matrilineal clan.

As Cunnison indicated, the clan (mukowa; mikowa pl.) is of "utmost importance to every Luapula resident" (1959, p. 62); more important than tribe (mutundu). Both the Lunda and Ushi clans are part of a wide and relatively homogeneous system<sup>3</sup> stretching from the Luba area in Zaire to the west, eastwards to Bemba country, and from Lake Tanganyika in the north, south to Lala country in central province (ibid). Indigenously, the clan system may be thought even more significant. In Mabumba the retiring Social Development officer (himself from the Luapula valley) told me that clans stretched across nations, and that indeed all people in Africa were related to each other through clans.

Clan membership is, it would seem, an essential focus of social identity for the Ushi. I was told that wherever one travelled there were obligations of hospitality among fellow clansmen; if one were hungry or thirsty one could expect sustenance, even if the people it is requested of were in one sense strangers. On two occasions (both beer parties) I witnessed the introduction of fellow clan members to one another, and on learning their clan connection there was much exchanging of compliments and offering of beer. In another sense the importance of clans was indicated by some local perceptions of European kinship. As a general comment people would often remark to me how they could not understand Europeans living without clans.

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<sup>3</sup> The clans mostly have the same names, or the same meaning expressed in different languages.

More particularly, when asking why some children were afraid of me I received the answer "Because you Europeans hide your clans"<sup>4</sup>.

For the Ushi a clan is theoretically a group of uterine kinsmen who trace their origin back through the female line to some unspecified ancestress at an immemorial time. In general, people are vague about clan origins, other than that they came originally from the West, and the clan names are said just to be names, not having any greater significance<sup>5</sup>. They translate as meaning "people of the..."

(Bena..... A list of Ushi clans is given in appendix 2).

Analytically clans may be broken down into sub-clans and lineages (fikota, sing. cikota), in terms of the degree of relationship reckoned between people; but, as Cunnison indicated, these distinctions are infrequently made indigenously, and no one would say "we are of different lineages of the same clan" (op. cit. p.75). Indeed, the term cikolwe can be applied equally to the recognised head of a group of matrilineally related kinsmen of whatever degree of inclusiveness up to the level of the clan.

By processes of recruitment (see below) villages tend to be identified primarily with the clan of the village cikolwe; secondly

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<sup>4</sup> I took this comment to indicate that people believe some kind of clan organisation must pertain among Europeans, but that for some perverse and maybe sinister reason they take pains to conceal the fact.

<sup>5</sup> Clan names are significant in terms of the role playing between members of joking clans, as characteristics associated in a derogatory sense with particular animals and plants are used as the basis for joking abuse. Cunnison describes joking relationships in some detail, and while they remain an important aspect of social occasions (especially as part of the entertainment at beer parties) they do not seem significant to the analysis of economic relations and behaviour, so I have chosen not to investigate them in this thesis.

with that of his wife (though other clans progressively marry in).

It is common to find sections of villages inhabited mainly by fellow clansmen, and for this to have an influence on the spatial deployment of newcomers to a village. And, as we saw in the previous chapter, tracts of land tend to be associated with one clan or another. Clans, then, provide a wide social framework within which the more specific terms of matrilineal relation find a place.

### Matrikin

Reversing the analysis, I now consider matrikinship outwardly from the individual. The core matrilineal kin group for the Ushi, from which the classificatory system devolves, is a woman, her brother and her son<sup>6</sup>. Through the principle of positional succession, the son may succeed to the position of MB, and indeed a strong identity between the two is expressed emically. I would hear a man say to a MB "I am Ayson and you are Ayson". Such succession may also apply within a sibling set (bamunyina, as defined below), the successor always being junior to the deceased. And on the death of a married man, the widow and her matrikin demand the replacement of the husband by a junior matrilineal relative of his; most often a brother, but possibly a sister's son. This practice is widely maintained, though without any of the ceremony which Cunnison described for the Lunda in the 1950s (1959, p. 93 ff.). The importance of positional succession, for my discussion, is that kin terms refer to social identities and statuses. As Cunnison says,

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<sup>6</sup> Poewe considers that in the descent context Luapula kinship resembles a Crow Type II ideal system (Poewe and Lovell, 1980, p.73).

when someone succeeds to another person's position "He takes over a complete new social personality. From the point of view of the lineage it is the mechanism for the perpetuation of names within it<sup>7</sup> and hence of the stability of its structure." (op. cit. p. 93).

In a sense, all those persons appearing in one kin category relative to ego share the same identity, though one which is modified by reference to seniority. This was made strikingly clear to me when a young man, faced with the social disgrace of being exposed for adultery, went to vent his anger on the girl and, failing to locate her, beat her younger sister up instead. When I asked why this was done, people said "It is just the same thing, to punish the girl or her young sister."

Of course, the classificatory nature of Ushi kinship terminology means that, for any ego, there are always many individuals describable by each of the terms. In practice, succession to a new kin status happens by replacing a single individual, which means a person must foster relations with that person and their matrikin if they are to be a strong candidate among many potentials for the succession. Importantly, though there is a degree of room for manipulation by individuals, progress to new social status depends on the death of others, and is a relatively slow process.

The institutions of development promote a rather different basis for status: meritocratic self-promotion. In later chapters I explore what it means, socially, to be a maize farmer, and examine where

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<sup>7</sup> Names are preserved by the Ushi for headmen and chiefs; less commonly is this the case in politically less significant lineages.

friction is developing between a quite gerontocratic village order and an ethic which allocates status to individualistic effort. For now, I wish to demonstrate how the kinship terminology allows for large numbers of individuals to be grouped under a relatively small set of terms and (as a basis for positional succession), how these terms can only be understood in relation to one another.

The description "a woman, her brother and son" as the core triad in Ushi kinship is perhaps misleading as it fails to convey the inclusiveness of these categories in context. They are best grasped by explaining through the emic terms.

Taking either a female or male ego, the kin category banyina (pl.; the singular vocative form is mayo) means all ego's female matrikin in the first ascending generation. It thus includes ego's biological mother and her female siblings and matrilineal parallel cousins of all degrees (see appendix 2. A). Banyina would most often be glossed as mother in English, but the Ushi term can include an indefinite number of individuals.

The indigenous term which I have glossed MB (uncle in loose English translation) is banalume (pl.; the singular vocative form is yama). This means all ego's male matrikin in the first ascending generation. More specifically, ego's banalume are all the male siblings and matrilineal parallel cousins of all the women that are ego's banyina (again, cousins to the nth degree may be included; see appendix 2. A).

Although all banyina and banalume are important senior relatives to ego, they may be distinguished one from another in terms of relative

seniority by the qualifications ..kalamba (elder) and ..aice (younger)<sup>8</sup>. What determines relative seniority is not calendar age, but the birth order of an original group of siblings. For example, ego's mother's elder uterine sister would be mayokalamba but whether or not a female parallel cousin of ego's mother is will depend on which of ego's mother's banyina that parallel cousin is descended from. Relative seniority is preserved across generations. Furthermore, closeness and importance of relation will be reckoned partly according to the material and social contexts in which the bearers of these categories find themselves. It is likely that the biological brother of a biological mother ("my real mother" as an informant might gloss in English) will be the yama of greatest importance to an individual, but the classificatory system allows that this need not be the case, and many other options are usually possible, though the more distant a relation, the more work would need to be put into activating the relationship. This point applies to all the other kin categories I shall be describing.

Matrikin within ego's own generation are collectively described by the term bamunyina, which may be defined as ego's siblings sharing the same biological mother, plus all matrilineal parallel cousins whose nyina is munyina to ego's nyina (i.e. matrilineal cousins to the nth degree; see Appendix 2. B)<sup>9</sup>. In address, relative seniority is expressed, a junior munyina being called mwaice wandi (wandi being

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<sup>8</sup> These terms are more widely applied than to kin: ..kalamba denotes stronger, bigger, potent and more important in relation to many things. For example, see chapter 2 on soils, where the small-grained more fertile sandy soil is denoted umucanga ukalamba.

<sup>9</sup> But see note 34; the term is also used of patrilineal parallel cousins.

the possessive adjective "my"), and a senior mukalamba wandi. There are also two sex specific terms, wesu (or ndume, which is the Central Bemba term), meaning male munyina of an ego of either sex, and nkashi (female munyina of an ego of either sex). Importantly, these terms are usually applied to uterine siblings only, reflecting the strong affective bonds between these individuals (Cf. Richards, A.I., 1939, p.115). It is usual when addressing a munyina of the same sex to use the seniority term rather than any of these others. Where wesu and nkashi are used, reference to seniority is still maintained through the presence or absence of the respectful form prefix ba (it is used of senior but not junior kin).

Because membership of clan/lineage is reckoned through females, matrikin in the first generation below ego are different depending on the sex of ego. This can seem confusing, as the same term will apply to matrikin or non-matrikin depending on the sex of ego. The confusion is minimised if one accepts (c.f. Crehan 1987, p. 161) that because children belong to their mother's clan, and that clans are exogamous, ego's father is essentially an affine, rather than a "blood"<sup>10</sup> relation. With this premise, the differential use of terms for the immediately junior generation becomes logical.

There are two core terms: mwana (pl. abana) and mwipwa (pl. bepwa). Abana is used of biological children, whether ego is male or female, but it is perhaps best to differentiate. For a husband, his abana in this limited context are children of his affine (wife); whilst for a wife they are lineage members in the generation immediately junior to

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<sup>10</sup> In general terms consanguineal relation is expressed matrilineally through the description befumo bumo ("of one womb").

her. Looking outwards from this core, those people that a man calls abana are the children of his affines and female bamulamu (siblings-in-law; see definition following)<sup>11</sup>. For a woman they are lineage members in the immediately junior generation, i.e. children of her female bamunyina. Abana are a woman's matrikin but not a man's.

The second term, bepwa, goes with banalume as one of the most important categories in the Ushi kinship system. It is the third term in the triad of a woman, her brother and her son. For a male ego, bepwa are all the children of his female bamunyina, i.e. lineage members in the generation immediately junior to him. For a female ego, bepwa are all the children of her male bamunyina. They are thus not her matrikin, but the relationship is an important one among the Ushi, the term mwana senge (meaning "child connected through a father") being used specifically, in place of mwipwa. The reciprocal, mayosenge is equally important, and FZ would be expected to contribute to the upbringing of BS and BD. This affinal tie is quite strong, though not of the order of that between MB and ZS. (See appendix 2. C for diagrams showing relations with the first descending generation).

In the second ascending and descending generations the terminology is less differentiated. In the second ascending there are just two terms commonly used: mama and shikulu, which can loosely be glossed "grandmother" and "grandfather", but are inclusive of all the banyina and banalume of an ego's banyina and banalume (plus affinal relations

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<sup>11</sup> I lay stress on abana being children of sisters-in-law rather than of male bamunyina of a male ego to emphasise the affinal rather than consanguineal nature of the relationship.



of that generation). In the second descending generation there is just a single common term (but see Poewe and Lovell, 1980, for a fuller account); beshekulu, which approximates to "grandchildren", meaning all the children of an ego's abana and bepwa.

### Affinal relations

For a people who are matrilineal where descent is concerned, it is possible to divide affines into two groups:

1. A group of kin who are the matrikin of ego's spouse, to whom ego is linked through his or her own marriage.
2. Individuals who are married to ego's matrikin (and their descendants).

(Illustrated in Appendix 2. D).

However, the total group of affines for a married person is made up of the superposition of these two sets for both spouses. Thus, as we saw in chapter 2, Eliam is brother-in-law to Abel by virtue of being the husband of the elder sister of Abel's wife.

Distributed across these two groups are the two important sets of affines, which might in English be approximated as parents-in-law and siblings-in-law. As with consanguineal relations, these groups are much more inclusive than in the English setting.

Bapongoshi (parents-in-law) include the parents of any ego's spouse, plus all those people that the spouse terms mayo and tata (see below for description of the category tata, "father"). Bapongoshi may be distinguished by sex as tatafyala ("father-in-law") and mamafyala

("mother-in-law")<sup>12</sup>. According to the distinction made above, batatafyala belong in group 2, whereas bamamafyala are in group 1. As we shall see, an important relation pertains between a man and his bapongoshi, in that he is expected to provide them with certain services in exchange for marriage to their daughter. For the matrilineal Ushi, on marriage a man is being recruited to reproduce the matrilineage of the woman, not vice versa.

Bamulamu (siblings-in-law) are of two sorts. First, (in category 1) there are the siblings of any ego's spouse, by which is meant all those people who are the spouse's bamunyina. Secondly (category 2) there are all those individuals who are married to ego's own bamunyina. No distinction is made emically between these two analytical types; they are all just bamulamu. In category 2, spouse's of ego's matrikin, ego's father (tata) may also be placed<sup>13</sup>. Tata (collectively bashibo) refers to ego's biological father (or perhaps this would be more relevantly put as mother's husband); and all the male bamunyina and husbands of female bamunyina (since the latter are called mayo) of the biological father; together with the husbands of all ego's banyina. There might seem to be some confusion here, as, for example, ego's FBs would not at first sight appear to satisfy the condition "spouse of ego's matrikin". The confusion

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<sup>12</sup> For the Kaonde Crehan noted (1987, Figure 8, p. 293) that a woman would distinguish her parents-in-law as shanjivyala and inanjivyala, whereas a man would use the single term bako. Among the Ushi (and the Bemba for that matter) no such distinction seems to be made.

<sup>13</sup> Cross-cousins, bafyala (mufyala, sing.), also belong in this group. That children of FS are effectively affines in group 2. follows logically from tata being himself an affine to ego. MB's children are affines of group 1. since they are matrilineal descendants of someone who has married into ego's matrikin.

disappears, though, when one remembers that the point of the classificatory system is that all people classified under one term are treated as sharing the same potential social identity (a sibling group being a prime example).

#### The ulupwa.

Earlier I stated that matrikin relations are thought of in terms of the clan, mukowa, which exists at greatly varying levels of inclusiveness. Likewise, some affinal relations find a structural place within the ulupwa, which is usually translated by English speaking Ushi as "extended family". Poewe found the ulupwa a very loosely defined association; one that could mean a nuclear, polygynous, polyandrous bilateral or multilateral extended "family" (Poewe and Lovell, 1980, p.76), with the commonest de facto form being a "gynandrous" association; many spouses associated informally with both sexes (ibid.).

For the Ushi in Mabumba, the commonest form of ulupwa both described and apparent was a bilateral association with the focus on a husband (umulume) and wife (umukashi) and their biological children, but potentially much more inclusive, both of matrikin and affines. With this focus, who possibly counts as an ulupwa member is relative to ego (see appendix 2. E). On marriage, a man does not consider his wife's matrikin to be part of his potential ulupwa, (nor she his), but his offspring will include both their father's and mother's "sides" as ulupwa. Thus, balupwa exist relative to marriages. Put differently, the two kinds of affine I have defined analytically are significant in relation to the ulupwa, since for a given ego affines of type one are not part of his ulupwa, whereas affines of type two

(especially his batata) are. His children, though, can consider both these sets of individuals as ulupwa. One can interpret this as indicating that whilst affines and matrikin are conceptually separate groups, marriage is significant to the creation of links resembling those of shared ancestry by virtue of the future creation of common descendants (c.f. Crehan, 1987, p. 158).

Two further analytical points are worth making here. The first is that defining social units in which people act is complicated by the fact that a defined unit (in this case ulupwa) is in a sense amorphous since composition varies according to ego. Furthermore, types of relation, both affinal and matrilineal, cross cut any such units in complex ways. Thus, though only certain bamulamu tend to get included as ulupwa members (connection through matrikin being privileged above connection through spouses), there may be important social and economic interaction between other bamulamu, as when the husbands of a set of sisters will assist each other in the preparation of the citemene fields for the bapongoshi.

Notwithstanding these emic distinctions, balupwa exist as real constellations of kin. It is important, though, to distinguish the term as a cognitive category (as illustrated above), from actual groups of kin who interact. The cognitive model determines a wide potential for membership, but who makes up any particular ulupwa (defined for an ego), will depend on local allegiances and shifts of residence. Balupwa produce for their own maintenance and reproduce matrilineages. They are, as I will justify later, identifiable with a unit which might be termed "household", necessarily a slippery

concept because of relativity to ego<sup>14</sup>.

The nature of the marriage link.

"Marriage does not create a separate legal institution, such as the nuclear family; rather, it contributes to the growth and development of an existing jural entity, the cikota."  
(Poewe, 1978, p.208).

Choice of a potential spouse seems to lie with the partners themselves<sup>15</sup>, though with the emphasis on men being recruited to other matrilineages, a man has to seek the approval of the woman's parents, or, as was the correct form in the past (though less so now), her yama. This initial approach would be accompanied by a gift (ubusonge) such as a chicken<sup>16</sup>, or more commonly now a money payment of a few kwacha. If this approach is accepted, the marriage will be marked officially by the couple spending a night together in a specially prepared house in the village of the wife's mother, and the wife's matrikin (chiefly her mother) bringing food for the husband for several days thereafter (shilanga mulilo; "showing the fire").

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<sup>14</sup> The difficulty of defining household has been noted elsewhere for Luapula province (cf. Gould, 1989, p.25).

<sup>15</sup> "Shotgun" marriages, though, have become a common occurrence in Mabumba. If a young man accidentally impregnates a girl, he may be forced into marriage by her matrikin, or alternatively have to pay a fine running into hundreds of kwacha, administered if necessary through the chief's court. Though no high value is placed on virginity itself, it is nonetheless thought that a woman is spoilt by having many sexual partners, and will have difficulty in bearing children as a result. This might go some way toward explaining why a woman's relatives will be keen to get her married if she becomes accidentally pregnant, and why men are looking for increasingly young wives (the rate of adultery in Mabumba is very high, and the number of illicit liaisons has apparently increased since the founding of the basic secondary school).

<sup>16</sup> Such small prestations are in striking contrast to the large marriage payments found among patrilineal Zambian peoples (e.g. many head of cattle for the Lozi); and indeed would be a source of amusement to outsiders in Luapula who came from such societies.

The couple would be expected to continue to live in the wife's mother's village<sup>17</sup> for some time thereafter, and for the husband to perform brideservice in the form of cutting citemene<sup>18</sup>. This might last for four years; thereafter the husband could remove his wife to a village of his choice, subject to the approval of her parents.

Though brideservice is still common, like the ubusonge it has become replaceable by a cash payment, though as this would be expected to run to hundreds of Kwacha, only some men can afford to do this; mainly the educated with some non-agricultural income. Likewise, temporary uxorilocality is not so strongly adhered to, though this has to be understood partly in terms of patterns of settlement (see below).

From marriage onwards the couple would have their own house in which they live with their children, and possibly junior relatives of either partner (primarily younger bamunyina though perhaps bepwa or extended abana) who stay for variable periods. This unit would be expected to be fairly self-sufficient, at least in terms of day-to-day subsistence needs. As we shall see in the next chapter, since production is organised in terms of complementary spheres of activity associated with individual male and female producers, the conjugal household provides a setting in which both men and women have

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<sup>17</sup> In practice this often means the wife's parents' village of residence; but if the wife's mother is divorced or widowed she will return to her immediate matrikin, and the daughter will bring her husband there, rather than to her father's village. See below on the long-term significance of matrilineal ties, versus the immediacy of marriage.

<sup>18</sup> See chapter 2 for a particular instance.

channels of access to most of their immediate requirements<sup>19</sup>.

Significantly, marriage is a fairly fragile tie, and the lines of cleavage follow matrilineal loyalties. It is rare to find a woman in her fifties who has not been married several times; by that age she will probably have settled in the vicinity of close matrikin and, with reproduction in the past, find living without a husband to her advantage<sup>20</sup>. Essentially, on marriage a man remains an outsider on the periphery of a woman's matrikin. Matrilineal traditions surrounding inheritance are such that on the death of a person any wealth they have accrued becomes the property of their matrikin. A common misfortune, decried by the churches and state alike, is for a woman to be left near destitute because on the death of her husband his matrikin have come to remove his possessions (and any valuable items such as radios and bicycles will usually have been bought by the husband and thereafter defined as his property). The reverse situation is likely to be less serious, because in practice husbands have the greater control over household finances and purchases. The principle of matrilineal inheritance, not so far much eroded by state attempts at eradication, means that it is not in the interests of wives and sons to contribute to the heritable estate of the husband-

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<sup>19</sup> I emphasise "immediate" here anticipating a later contrast with the much more long-term benefits that accrue through matrilineal linkages.

<sup>20</sup> Women who can obtain necessary male labour from junior matrikin or purchase often prefer to remain single as household heads to maintain full autonomy in the use of resources (including running their own maize farms). Women's interests in producing in women's clubs are discussed in chapter 8.

father.<sup>21</sup> With material loyalties divided the potential for marriages to break is high, and can easily be precipitated by some dispute which usually revolves around the husband on one side, and the wife and her close matrikin on the other. The following example illustrates the degree of leverage that matrikin can have over marriages.

Paulina<sup>22</sup> had been married for several years to a travelling herbalist/traditional healer (shinganga) who was noted for his frequent absences and equally frequent drunkenness. Paulina's mother told her that she should leave him, as he was wasting all his money on beer and not assisting her or her children in any way. Paulina demurred. One night a row developed. Paulina's mother was nagging her once again to leave her husband: in a fit of anger Paulina told her mother that she didn't want to, and accused her of trying to use witchcraft to break up the marriage. In response to this offensive accusation Paulina's drunken brother beat her badly, attracting the attention of neighbours who intervened.

Two days later Paulina's husband arrived in the village, and said he was taking her away with him as her relatives were bad. At the time she seemed ready to leave. Her husband sold their house to an ARPT worker, and said he would be coming back for her soon. About a week later she had changed her mind, and her yama bought back the house

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<sup>21</sup> In this part of Luapula inherited estates are usually of relatively little significance (a few personal items, standing crops and the use of the deceased's fields). There remains scope for cooperation during marriage, which can increase the productive capacities of all parties, a matter for discussion in the next chapter.

<sup>22</sup> In house 27; see appendix 2. G.



for her to live in. She regarded herself as divorced, remaining in Chipanta with her children.

On divorce, any children may continue to live with either parent; to be more precise, if they are more than about twelve years old, they may choose themselves which parent to stay with. But ideally, and as witnessed by de facto arrangements, children would stay with their mother "because they belong to the mother's people". Abel's parents had divorced when he was a child. He explained that he had nothing to do with his father or his people (bena tata) not because of any bad feeling, but simply due to his mother and her lineage being his "real relatives". On a more pragmatic note, men are not regarded as skilled in raising small children, and, with the exception of a mayosenge, a father's matrikin would tend to shun any suggestion that they look after children who are not their own matrikin.

#### Mother's clan and father's clan.

Thus far I may have given the impression that the matrilineal principle of descent is both clearly defined and superordinate in the Ushi conception of kinship. This, however, is a generalisation needing modification.

In terms of membership, all informants said that children belonged to their mothers' clans. As with many such matters, the reason for this was often given simply as "because it is the ulutambi (tradition; custom) of our chiefs and headmen." Occasionally some fuller explanation would be forthcoming, such as that women should be honoured in this way because they suffer so much in pregnancy, giving birth and rearing children, which men do not (this was a man's

opinion). On the other hand, the relationship between a child and its father's clan is not insignificant, though it is a different kind of relationship to that with the mother's clan. Poewe expressed the difference as being that a child belongs to its mother's clan, but is child of its father's clan, and the difference is highlighted through terminology; the "father of" relationship is expressed through the term abana whereas matrikin descendents are bepwa. My data suggest, however, that a stronger connection to fathers exists for the Ushi than for the Lunda. Whilst recent economic changes may have played a role in this, comparison with Audrey Richards' work on the Bemba suggests bilateral stress may have been significant for a considerable time (e.g. 1939 p.119).

When expressing why father's clan (bena tata) was important, people made reference to local notions of conception. These had interesting variations, but all amounted to saying that both mother and father made some contribution in the creation of a child. Ruth, an older woman, thought that the substance of a child came from a man, and that the mother was merely a receptacle in which the developing foetus was nourished. The more important part of what constituted a child came from the father. In contrast, Ackson, a man of roughly the same age, said that during intercourse the blood (mulopa) of a woman mixed with the water (menshi) of a man, and the child would inherit characteristics equally from both parents (if one parent were intelligent, and the other not, the child could be either, regardless of sex). Interestingly, what he said was that the child could resemble either its mother's people (bena bakwe; lit. "his/her people") or father's people (bena tata), as well as the two

individuals, stressing the shared identity of kin<sup>23</sup>.

My interpretation of the possibly confusing variability in ideas about conception (and more generally in the aspects of Ushi kinship presented thus far) is that a wide range of contextual interpretation and stress on different types of kin link is acceptable, but that matriliney, expressed in mikowa, remains the overriding principle. I do not think that recognition of paternal contribution to the substance of a child denies the superordinate position of matrilineality. Rather, what is recognised in the production of a child (and more widely in the fact of marriage) is the conjoining of two distinct matrilineages<sup>24</sup>. What should be noticed is that these expressions of "biological relationship" are chiefly about a child's connection to two sets of people who are themselves matrilineally related to one another; the child's own matrikin and the matrikin of the child's father. They are not about the marriage relation itself, nor expected loyalty to a father as an individual, which are left unspecified.

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<sup>23</sup> Though my evidence is not rigorous on this point, the variations in thoughts on conception would seem to reflect a fair degree of latitude in acceptable de facto social arrangements; the people granting equal or superior paternal contributions to conception were also those in households where a fair degree of father-son cooperation in production was to be found. These observations differ from those collected by Poewe among the Lunda, where fathers were thought insignificant to the constitution of their children. Some informants in Mabumba had learned the physiological roles of men and women in procreation through formal education. Whilst none of the indigenous conceptions presented here came from such informants, I cannot state for sure that their ideas were not influenced by non-traditional sources of knowledge.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *supra*, on the purpose of affinity.

Kinship and residence: a case study<sup>25</sup>

I have, to this point, singled out abstracted elements of Ushi kinship (kin categories; the nature of marriage) to pass comment on the relative significance of matriliney. To this I add now a case study which presents an important empirical element in the content of relations between kin: settlement and its variation through time. The material will introduce particular groups of kin who will appear again in the chapters on production and distribution.

The history of Chipanta village.

I relate the history of Chipanta village as fairly typical of residential fusion and fission in the second half of the twentieth century.

The village's oldest resident, Sebastiano, was in his twenties when Chipanta was founded in 1930. His father, BaChipanta, had married a daughter of the then chief Mabumba, and asked the chief permission to start a new village. This was granted, and a new village site was chosen by the Mansa-Samfya road to which BaChipanta decamped with his wife, a small group of his bamunyina, Sebastiano and his other children. The village grew from there, with the major clan remaining Bena chulu (anthill people) as men married the younger sisters (bamunyina) of the headman <sup>26</sup>. It was explained to me that other

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<sup>25</sup> This case should be read in conjunction with the village map and core genealogy for Chipanta, Appendix 2. F and 2. G.

<sup>26</sup> Bena chulu was the clan of Sebastiano's father, and it is significant that he and his surviving siblings would often give their clan as bena chulu, emphasising the link to an influential male relative. As we shall see, this is also significant in terms of the kin composition of the village.

clans (such as Bena nkalamo; lion) came in to Chipanta when men of the village, having gone to perform brideservice, later chose to return with their wives. The village continued to grow until the 1950s, when many of the young people went away in search of employment on the Copperbelt, and gradually the original founders died out. Then, in 1978, chief Mabumba asked the headman of neighbouring Chibiliti village to reform Chipanta. He, a mwipwa of the first two headmen<sup>27</sup>, started rebuilding on the site of the old village (only one small section of the old village remained, contiguous with the post-1943 site of the chief's village). After his own house was built one of his sisters came and settled beside him, and four of her adult daughters followed suit. These were followed by less closely related bena chulu people, notably two old sisters<sup>28</sup>, husbandless but with their children and grandchildren, who described the headman as their yama. Matrikin in the second descending generation (beshikulu) were the next group to arrive, mostly being people in their early twenties who were recently married. After that period various kinsmen from Chibiliti's father's clan moved in, and most recently a number of strangers had come to settle in Chipanta, particularly men who had worked for the Chinese road team and married local women. Between 1978 and 1988 Chipanta had redeveloped to the level of thirty-eight houses and a population

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<sup>27</sup> In line with the practice of positional succession, the headman changed names from Chibiliti to Chipanta on moving.

<sup>28</sup> In houses 22 and 23; see appendix 2. G.

of around two hundred<sup>29</sup> (though this apparently was smaller than in the 1940s).

Chipanta presents an interesting example, then, of a village that is both old by Ushi standards (sixty years) and new (ten years since its refounding). Because the pattern of resettlement is remembered in some detail the relationship between kinship and settlement can be studied closely. In chapter 9 a more general treatment of the history of Ushi settlement is given; here I am considering the micro-level to understand how kinship influences the spatial deployment of people.

There are two aspects of the composition of Chipanta which are initially striking: the extent to which any one villager recognises other villagers as kin (relations expressed through kin terms); and the fluidity of village membership when considered across its entire history. Both these matters I refer to here through individual biographies, as Chipanta was of such a size as to make a complete genealogy very difficult to collect; and a varying mixture of short and long-term absentees rendered an instantaneous analysis of people's movements impractical (and naturally these two difficulties are interrelated).

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It is difficult to quote accurate population figures because of the great mobility of the population. People may be reported as household members who are hardly ever present; and different people will be present or absent at different times. I say houses rather than households deliberately, anticipating a definition of household which is not isomorphous with "residents of a single house." In the next chapters household will be considered further in terms of the interconnections of their members (relative emphases on production and distribution) and how their composition is related to the presence of other kin nearby or in urban areas.

Interrelatedness in the village.

Langson, younger brother of Sebastiano, related to me the terms he would use of all the household heads and their spouses (if married) in Chipanta<sup>30</sup>. Some analysis of these relations gives an instantaneous picture of relatedness within the village; thereafter I shall present some of Sebastiano's biography to indicate the kinds of movement of population that have been typical of Mansa district.

Of the thirty-eight houses in the village, there were seven (18 per cent) in which Langson said the central adults (irrespective of sex or whether married) were unrelated to him. Four of these belonged to relatives of one of the teachers at the new basic secondary school (kinsmen who had followed him there in part because of his relatively high income and also to have access to his oxen and plough). These houses were some of the newest in the village and had been built on the side nearest the school. Having said these people were unrelated, several of the wives were bena chulu (Langson's father's clan), though Langson did not recognise any closer tie<sup>31</sup>. Of the other three houses to which Langson professed no relation, one belonged to an ex-council worker returned from Mufulira with his wife (the latter had some weak affinal tie to the headman). The other two belonged to a couple of bena nkalamo brothers who had arrived with their wives to be near other brothers married in Chipanta.

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<sup>30</sup> I reproduce the information in full, with explanations for kin terms not yet defined, in appendix 2. H.

<sup>31</sup> Sebastiano had explained to me that newcomers to a village would often choose one on the basis of the locally most important clan, since sharing clan membership tended to guarantee fairly hospitable treatment.

Among the conjugal households to which Langson did profess relation, there were some in which one of the spouses was unrelated to him. In terms of any principles relating matrilineality to residence, it is interesting to see which kinds of relation strangers were marrying, and what characteristics, if any, these strangers had in common.

| <u>Gender of<br/>inmarrying stranger</u> | <u>Relation of spouses to Langson</u> |                              |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                                          | <u>matrikin</u>                       | <u>paternal<br/>matrikin</u> |
| male                                     | 1                                     | 4                            |
| female                                   | 1                                     | 4                            |

There seem, at least for one ego in a significant matrilineage, to have been roughly equal numbers of stranger men and women marrying into the village, and for the greater proportion of Langson's relatives involved in such marriages to be his paternal matrikin<sup>32</sup>, rather than matrikin. Indeed, in terms of overall village composition I found that fifteen houses were definitely occupied by paternal matrikin, whereas only six were matrikin (most of whom were, like himself, old and single; a group of senior bamunyina). Even sixty years after the original founding of Chipanta, its dissolution and reformation, the dominant and visible kin group is of matrikinsmen of the original headman.

As for the strangers who had married in, among the men there were two sorts of people. First, there were bena nkalamo brothers (bamunyina) who had married in from neighbouring Langi village (and whose married

<sup>32</sup>

By Langson's paternal matrikin I mean members of the matrilineage of the village founder (Langson's father).



brothers followed them later)<sup>33</sup>. Secondly, there were a couple of men, from outside the province, who had arrived contingently for the building of the Chinese road, and had decided to marry and stay. The women all appear to have been married by paternal matrikinsmen of Langson whilst the latter were working away from home.

In addition to marriages where one of the spouses was a stranger to Langson, there were six in which both partners were his relatives. These appear mainly to have been cross-cousin marriages (two in which the man was matrikin to Langson; four paternal matrikin) though it is difficult to be precise because most of them applied to people in the second generation below Langson where the term abana fuses all but a man's own lineage members. For this same reason, throughout my analysis here I do not account for all thirty-eight houses.

So far I have dealt only with conjugal houses: these constituted twenty-three (sixty percent) of the thirty-eight. Nine houses were inhabited by single women with their children; one by an old woman and her grandson; two by adult men living alone; two were overflows for the unmarried children of existing houses; and Langson resided with his grandson. One could say that just over one quarter of all houses were female headed. In all these houses the women had children (and the older ones grandchildren) and had been married in the past (their husbands had either died or divorced them). All ten women were related to Langson. Four were his bamayosenge; one a mwana and another a mwishikulu (all paternal matrikin). Two others

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<sup>33</sup> These men followed women of their clan who had earlier been brought to Chipanta as wives (see above).

were bamama; and the grandmother with grandson his mayo<sup>34</sup> (all matrikin). The older of these women had been married several times and lived in a number of villages and towns before settling in Chipanta.

#### Villagers' movements.

To lend greater time depth to this look at settlement and kinship, I now turn to Sebastiano's life history, which I found to be fairly typical among older residents of Chipanta; only in a couple of cases did I find people aged over fifty who claimed to have lived there all their lives.

In 1935 Sebastiano left Chipanta to marry at Chikomba, a village near Kasanga. At first he worked only at citemene cutting, but in 1937 he began work as a mechanic on the Copperbelt, leaving his wife and children behind in Chikomba. That job finished in 1945, and after doing various pieces of work Sebastiano returned full time to Chikomba in 1947, where he took up work as a sawyer, selling planks to the Boma<sup>35</sup>. In 1954 he went to Chembe in the south of Mansa district and began work for the Immigration post on the Luapula. At about that time he divorced his first wife and remarried in Chembe, fathering nine children by the second wife to add to the nine he already had.

Shortly after Independence Sebastiano was called to work for the

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<sup>34</sup> House 3; see Appendix 2. G.

<sup>35</sup> Boma is the acronym for British Overseas Military Administration; it became synonymous with administrative townships, and the term is still in common use in Zambia.

police in Milambo, the chiefdom immediately to the south of Mabumba, where he stayed until retirement in 1975. He then returned to Mabumba's, living with his second wife until her death in 1977. He married again briefly, but his mind was still on his second wife, so he left his third and went to live with his younger sister (Vera) and brother (Langson) in the old section of Chipanta. Finally, he bought a house that became available in the new section of the village<sup>36</sup>, but has continued to eat at his sister's place. He came back to the village his father had founded because now, with no wife, and most of his children in Chembe or on the Copperbelt, it was appropriate, he said, to live with his mother's people, particularly the surviving members of his immediate sibling set, and with his paternal matrikin ulupwa members with whom he could enjoy beneficial economic relations through virtue of his father being the cikolwe of the village. This needs a little explanation.

Though I am continuing to emphasise the importance of matrilineal links, I must not omit the fact that among bearers of "traditional" authority (chiefs and headmen) it is not uncommon for authority to be passed on to sons (with the respect of the community). As a general and enduring principle, chiefship cannot pass to a chief's sons, but it has often been the case that sons have been appointed as "guardians" over a part of a chief's territory (icalo). Also, according to Ushi history (Chanda and Yambayamba, 1973, case 9 p.3 and case 19. p.2), some sons of the first chief received the honour of being appointed to two new chiefdoms by him as they were the only men to stay and help him in a difficult battle. Even now, these two

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<sup>36</sup> Number 38; see Appendix 2. G.

chiefs are referred to as "sons" by the rest of the Ushi chiefs, who are all Bena ngulube (pers. comm. Chief Mabumba). The same sorts of principle apply to headmen, and exceptionally headmanship may pass to a son. Meritorious activity can be, and has been, able to outweigh the usual matrilineal claims to office. In the realm of politics paternal links between men are stressed, and in this the Ushi more closely resemble the Bemba (though with no corporate "royal" clan), as described by Audrey Richards (1940a, p.88), than the Kaonde (Crehan, 1987, passim) who seem almost exclusively matrilineal in terms of inherited status<sup>37</sup>. Thus, Sebastiano and his siblings enjoyed status in the village that their father had founded, where a high proportion of the inhabitants belonged to his, not their matrilineage.

What Sebastiano's peregrinations also show is the great fluidity over time of residence, affected by affinal and lineage considerations and economic exigencies, such as having to search for urban employment. I would be told that people could elect to live exactly where they chose<sup>38</sup>; indeed the formally educated would often express this according to a state ideology: we are all citizens of one Zambia and may move as we please. Nonetheless, complete strangers in a village are a rarity, as discussion of Langson has shown, unless one counts government staff (who themselves often marry locally) and

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<sup>37</sup> Connected to this greater emphasis on paternal ties may be the fact that patrilineal parallel cousins are included under the term bamunyina by the Ushi, whereas they are not under the equivalent terms used by the Kaonde (kolojanji, elder; and nkasanji, younger; Crehan, 1987, pp. 153-154).

<sup>38</sup> What I mean here is freedom to reside in any village; barring antisocial behaviour. To set up a new hamlet or village requires the permission of the chief. See chapter 9.

recruitment is through birth as matrikin, moving to be near matrikin, or attachment through marriage<sup>39</sup>. But, the composition of any one village will vary considerably even over a period of a few months, the oldest members tending to be the least mobile. Much of this movement is to do with visiting urban based relatives, an important element in the circulation of material resources, a matter I take up again shortly.

I conclude this case study with some tentative observations on changes occurring in the fluidity of residence. Though I have said that in the short-term the oldest village residents seemed the least mobile, in the longer term I see evidence that their descendents may be less mobile than them when lifetimes are considered. Most of Sebastiano's travels happened during the colonial period, when the industrial economy was expanding and the imposition of a hut (and later poll) tax forced massive labour migration in northern Zambia (e.g. Gould, 1989, p.113). By the late 1980s recession in the national economy had led to a situation in which very few vacant jobs remained in the formal sector. Many young men who might previously have left the village for several years were now remaining to be farmers (that is, maize farmers) and there was a general feeling that a better life could be had by staying at home and working hard. Fifteen of the twenty-three conjugal houses in Chipanta in 1988 were married couples aged under forty, who had never worked away from the

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It should be noted that government staff are not evenly distributed among villages: they are found at centres of rural infrastructure such as schools and clinics, i.e. in chiefs' villages and some other large villages. Thus, apart from one secondary school teacher, there were no government staff living in Chipanta, but over the road in Mabumba there was an entire community.

village (except in a few cases of brideservice), and who did not intend looking for urban employment (though one man, with secondary education, wanted to get a formal qualification in pharmacy and work in Mansa). This element of economic expediency undoubtedly adds to the wider historical tendencies to fix Luapula populations spatially. In chapter 9 I will be arguing in detail the relationships between these changes and the requirements of the way the state operates.

One other point to be made here is that the grouping of population in permanent villages is significant in the overall proximity of kin. Irrespective of what I said earlier about whether men or women were marrying in to Langson's kin in Chipanta, the majority of marriages in Chipanta are contracted between individuals originating in those villages constituting Mabumba Agricultural camp. Thus, even if one's kin are not mainly in Chipanta, the chances are that they are within walking distance. Even where men are still performing brideservice, this no longer often requires any shift in residence: my research assistant and Eliam<sup>40</sup> lived in Chipanta whilst cutting fitemene for their bapongoshi who lived in the chief's village, on the other side of the main road.<sup>41</sup>

What does being a kinsman mean?

I have outlined the major kin categories and associations of the Ushi

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<sup>40</sup> Houses 20 and 19 respectively; see Appendix 2. G.

<sup>41</sup> Not everyone in Mabumba chiefdom lives in a large, permanent village, but over eighty percent of the population does. The rest are either "big farmers" with their separate households or hamlets; or residents of small settlements in distant parts of the bush where houses are still built from poles and dagga and citemene is the predominant, if not only agricultural activity.

in Mabumba. In the case study, the relative prominence of matrilineality in terms of residential grouping (at the village level) has been supported empirically. What I have not considered is the content of relationships, nor the relation between matrilineage, ulupwa and residential grouping at the level of the house. So far I have emphasised the relative weakness and transience of the marriage tie; yet Chipanta was composed mainly of houses containing a man and wife with their children, so I need now to work toward a definition of household, if indeed the concept "household" can reasonably be said to describe a discrete analytical or empirical unit.

A collection of statements about expectations between kin, drawn across the range of types of residential arrangement in Chipanta, adduces an interpretation close to Crehan's (1987 pp. 181-182): that the relationship of marriage represents an important nexus of economic activity in which men and women are mutually interdependent; and while marriage lasts it is the focus (children included) for the deployment of the productive resources of each partner. In contrast, matrilineal ties have a less immediate character: they are permanent and may always be resorted to, but in terms of meeting daily subsistence requirements they are subordinate during marriage (cf. *ibid.*). These points, concerning the association of matrikin with the long-term and spouses with the short-term, and what accommodations are made in the absence of marriage, are best elaborated through examples. This is not least because the sorts of relationship into which a person may enter are strongly connected to relative seniority.

As a young individual one's loyalty and willingness to provide

services should, I was told, go initially to one's parents and banalume, and thereafter to one's sibling set (bamunyina). This is because the former are the chief benefactors of children; and, as children grow older, the principle of support from elders in return for respect and services from juniors is played out again within the sibling set<sup>42</sup>(which tends to be large, spanning a considerable age range).

In principle, parents take all the day-to-day decisions about children, and should, if possible, provide for their everyday needs. In the event of there being some long-term requirement that cannot be met within the "household", the parents would approach, initially, an elder male munyina of the mother (i.e. yama of the child). The most frequent demand made in this context is for support with schooling; though primary education is free in Zambia, uniforms are compulsory and expensive, as are writing materials and books. I must stress, though, that such demands cannot be made willy nilly simply because an individual is in the category banalume: the context of making a demand is important for its realisation. My research assistant Abel had his secondary education payed for by a yama, in the circumstances that his parents had divorced (his mother alone could not afford to keep him at school); and that this particular yama was the materially best placed of all to help, as a District Court Messenger, receiving a government stipend. Not insignificantly, as a government worker he was a person who stressed the importance of development, to be

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It should be noted here that the kin terms bamayo, batata, banalume and bamunyina are intended as defined earlier (i.e. inclusive of classificatories): degrees of closeness are recognised, but in the absence, say, of genetrix, the sort of relationship expected with a "mother" can be developed with another bamayo.



achieved through education, and he believed in the rightness of furthering his mwipwa's schooling, where others might consider it a waste of time, removing a young and active contributor from agricultural production.<sup>43</sup>

The kinds of demands that might legitimately be made of a yama could alternatively fall on an older muniyina. So, at a later stage in the developmental cycle of the "household", demands tend to fall more on successful bamuniyina, while banalume, in later life, will receive some material return from those they have earlier supported. I found that many of the older residents of Chipanta, regardless of residential arrangement, were in receipt of some assistance from junior relatives away in towns or other rural areas. Usually, the assistance received is in the form of cash, or of expensive manufactured items scarce outside the larger towns (clothes, blankets and household items). The junior relatives giving such assistance are usually bepwa or abana, and their support would be for fathers as well as matrikin, though, as we have earlier seen, it is more common than not for material ties with a father to be broken on the divorce of parents. Only in one case did I come across an adult, unmarried son, living with and working for his father (Langson Chipanta), though in this example the young man was still attending Mabumba Basic Secondary School, with assistance from his father, and all his matrikin were at some distant place where his father had married during his colonial wanderings. Importantly, though an uncommon arrangement, there was no sense in which it was looked upon as

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See also the case of Paulina in this chapter for another example of assistance which a yama might give, there in relation to an adult mwipwa.

culturally aberrant, because of the principle that children are free to choose which parent to live with, according to circumstances<sup>44</sup>.

These are examples of expectations between the core matrilineal triad of a woman, her brother and her children. As well as these long-term material connections with kin there are a myriad of small exchanges of goods and services operating on a daily basis. Children pass around between the houses of their first and second ascending generation relatives (of both father's and mother's matrikin, though with greater emphasis on the latter), being fed and generally cared for (that is, by female relatives). While children are young, this is a way of allowing both parents to go off to their fields unhindered. Adults also circulate and eat at the houses of close kin, though this is acceptable on a sustained basis only for unmarried men. The same can be said of the sharing of beer.<sup>45</sup>

It is the sharing of food crops, whether through invitations to eat or exchange of the products, which is one of the most obvious constituents of kin relations. "Giving food is the way we help one another" is an often heard phrase when discussing what it means to be a kinsman. If one is in need of something, one does not wait to be offered, but goes and asks for it from the most appropriate

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<sup>44</sup> This particular case might seem to suggest a set of new values; a father who had lived in town and a son at secondary school, when the latter is a privilege of one tenth of the provincial population (Gould, 1989, p.41). However, cross checking with a number of informants suggested close cooperation between fathers and sons is not a matter of special note unless material interests become a source of dispute, in which case other interested parties may try to stress the superordinacy of matrilineal ties.

<sup>45</sup> But see next chapters on beer increasingly being subsumed within monetary relations.

kinsperson. For example, a woman short of cassava flour<sup>46</sup> would go and demand some of a younger sister. Failing that, an older sister or brother might be approached. At a later but unspecified time the donor would expect to make similar demands of the receiver. The person who would actually be approached for such assistance might first depend on consideration of kinship distance and the sorts of principle I am describing, but thereafter who is most nearly available and materially best placed would be factors of equal importance<sup>47</sup>.

As well as these small exchanges happening within the village, "lumpier" exchanges are made from time to time with more distant relatives. It is usual for adults to travel two or three times per year to the Copperbelt or other areas where kin (usually their matrilineal kin) live, often in August and September, the slackest time in the agricultural calendar, at least for women who tend to be less involved than men in cultivation. If adults are too busy, then children may be delegated to go. From the village it would be appropriate to take groundnuts (always in demand, and expensive in the towns), some dried fish from Lake Bangweulu, and chickens. As in the specific cases mentioned earlier of senior kin visiting bepwa and abana in town, it would generally be expected that visits to urban

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<sup>46</sup> In general, all women are expected to be self-sufficient in cassava, but the difficulties involved in maintaining an even supply of flour (especially in the rainy season when conditions make drying erratic) make for frequent temporary shortages, which can be made good through diffuse networks of reciprocity.

<sup>47</sup> See earlier example of the choice of a particular yama for support with secondary education.

kin would yield manufactured goods.<sup>48</sup>

Continuing small exchanges of goods within the village and between village and town<sup>49</sup> are described overtly as central to (if not almost synonymous with) social relations. Any person who repeatedly refuses the legitimate claims of relatives will eventually be shunned and talked of disparagingly "Ali itemwa" (he/she is mean). On the other hand, repeatedly to make claims when one has nothing with which to reciprocate (regarded as begging, ukulomba) is considered shameful (icisoni) and will also lead eventually to the severance of social ties. This matter I shall take up again in the next chapter, as Karla Poewe argued strongly that changes toward capitalistic production in the Luapula valley, premised on a logic of accumulation, necessarily meant the progressive rejection of matrilineal ties, withdrawing into a unit resembling the nuclear family; a process legitimised by the adoption of Protestant ideologies (1978).

So far I have been discussing the content of kin relations in terms of the distribution of resources. What, then, of their production? The preceding paragraph hints at the fact that although social

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<sup>48</sup> It is important to stress the degree to which there is dependence on cash, or those who have cash, to obtain household items. Most consumable items (cooking oil, washing soap, salt, sugar etc.) cannot be or no longer are produced (in the case of salt) in the village. And durable items such as clothing, plates, hoes, containers for beer brewing, cooking pots and so forth likewise are not village products (though see Appendix 1 and chapter 5 on metal work in Chipanta). Nevertheless, all these items are or have become "essentials" in village life and are often described as the main reason why people in the villages need cash much more than they used to.

<sup>49</sup> I am here referring to kin-mediated exchanges; trade with towns is covered separately in chapter 5.

relations are maintained partly through material exchanges, there is an expectation that everyone who is able should contribute to production (c.f. Crehan, 1987, pp. 61-62), i.e. produce something that can be entered into these networks of exchange. Examining the relations between production and distribution helps to reveal the contextual significance of the "household" and ulupwa, and the degree to which Ushi society revolves around distribution rather than production.

Productive activities, and agricultural production in particular, were distinctly excluded from networks of reciprocity. It was possible that a man would help a younger sister with cultivation if she were not yet married, or divorced. Or, a man might organise his younger brothers into giving similar help to an aged yama. It was more likely that such help would be given for building a pit latrine or insaka. For agricultural tasks, it was becoming increasingly popular to hire piece work labour for cash, and communal field activities except those paid for with cash were now rare.<sup>50</sup> What was emphasised is that all adults, for as much of the time as possible, should be able to produce food to meet their own subsistence needs, and those of their closest dependents (most often biological abana). What this means in practice is that people produce individualistically, but with a minimal requirement for a "cooperating unit" consisting of at least one man and one woman (because their agricultural tasks, as a broad generalisation, are

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The uses of cash is treated in much greater detail in chapters 4, 5 and 8, where instances of communally based labour in relation to government promoted schemes are also described.

complementary)<sup>51</sup>. Put here at its simplest, this is because men till whilst women husband (and have control over the distribution of food crops): women need access to male labour to be able to plant, whilst men must gain access to food through women.<sup>52</sup> For adults of reproductive age, this cooperation is deemed to occur most appropriately in marriage. Indeed, I would often be told, for example, by a man, that he would not help a sister with agricultural tasks or provision of food "because she has a husband". In the absence of marriage, appropriately close matrikin will complement each other's agricultural tasks. There were several instances in Chipanta of a divorced nyina having her adult, unmarried male bana living with her or in a house nearby, and cultivating for her in the same way a husband would (it would be more difficult to obtain such services of a married son, for reasons given above)<sup>53</sup>. In the case of the Chipanta sibling set, similar cooperation was occurring in a set of old male and female bamunyina.

#### The "household"

It is this immediate sphere of the production and distribution of subsistence resources, whether within marriage or outside it, which can be empirically identified with "household". Such groups are often, though not always, synonymous with those people living in a single house. The relatively large number of conjugal houses in

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<sup>51</sup> See chapter 4 for detailing of precisely what this cooperation entails.

<sup>52</sup> I am deliberately leaving out cash maize production here.

<sup>53</sup> For example, Betty, Paulina and Raban, houses 27, 28 and 29; Appendix 2. G.

Chipanta, consisting of young spouses with small children (looking rather like a nuclear household) would be such. On the other hand, using this definition, some of the Chipanta sibling set would also count as a household. Though they sleep in separate houses, Vera cooks for all of them (Sebastiano, Langson and Langson's son), and they form an intimate group for the exchange of resources, including money<sup>54</sup>. It should also be noted that "households", even when not centred on marriage, aren't necessarily exclusively matrilineal: Langson's son is not matrikin to the others. He had opted to stay with his father who was prepared to support his education.

I would argue that the "household" as I have defined it is the minimal association to which the label ulupwa is attached. It can include very many other people, of ego's father's and mother's matrikin, the degree of inclusiveness depending on the context in which ulupwa is discussed<sup>55</sup>, and the degree to which relations between potential ulupwa members (potentiality residing with the matrikin and affinal terms defined earlier in the chapter) are activated. As Cunnison indicated in the Luapula valley, one significance of the classificatory kin terminology is its potentially limitless inclusiveness, and that beyond definite relations people will tend to use a certain kinship term of a person because of the way they behave towards that person, not vice versa (1959, p. 75).

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<sup>54</sup> Money complicates the picture as it is used for labour, rather than Langson and Sebastiano cultivating for Vera. Nevertheless, it is within the group of four people that money is circulated to meet their combined subsistence needs.

<sup>55</sup> For example, if someone says that most of their ulupwa are living elsewhere, this is usually a reference to matrikin; whereas ulupwa members cited within the same village are usually bilateral.

Nonetheless, the household has a distinctive meaning as a unit within which minimal cooperation between individualistic producers provides for the bulk of subsistence needs of those producers and their closest dependents. Furthermore, the household has some identity as a political unit, identified through the name of the recognised head, and may act as a unit in the event of disputes, such as over access to land (though such disputes may also operate at the level of clan or lineage). In such situations the description "inganda ya.." ("house of") would be used, rather than ulupwa<sup>56</sup>.

Households also act as the units from which resources are disbursed through the networks of (mainly) matrilineal kin; though in the case of conjugal households there is considerable potential for conflict as husband and wife have loyalties to separate sets of matrikin, and the food crops most often used for gifts are in principle under the control of the wife.

Except where households act as inganda, though, it is important to note that villagers themselves do not conceive of the ulupwa as an empirical unit: it does not refer to any particular residential arrangement, nor is there any linguistic distinction between ulupwa as a cognitive category and ulupwa as an actual set of people. An identifiable group of kin constituting an ulupwa could consist of anything from a couple living in a single hut to the inhabitants of several huts dispersed across a village, or even in different (though near) villages. Examples in chapters 4 and 5 will illustrate the point.

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<sup>56</sup> Inganda connotes both the homestead and those who live in it.



One household in the chief's village requires special mention for its uniqueness. It consisted of four young men; secondary school graduates who were not yet married. Two were local, whilst the others were friends from school. They were all entering maize farming on quite a large scale, and were in the vanguard of individuals growing vegetables on the dambo. Though other young bachelors had their own houses, they were exceptional in running theirs on a self-sufficient basis, doing all their own cooking, washing and other household chores, in addition to farming. With the mothers of two of them living in the same village, they could legitimately have demanded to be fed in the parental homes, and obtained their younger sisters' labour for housework. Through buying mealie meal, they were independent of the need for female labour to provide their staple food<sup>57</sup>. And when they did require extra labour for whatever task, they preferred to pay cash and choose someone who was known to be good at that particular job. They saw independence and self-sufficiency as their primary aims; an outlook which had been instilled through their secondary education.

This particular group, and their friends, will feature in later chapters as they represent a new accumulative outlook focused on the creation and retention of cash within a small unit, making them distinct from most other villagers. Interestingly, too, they refer to themselves as a "household", using the English term.

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See following chapters on the division of labour in agricultural production.

### Summary

My treatment in this chapter has been generally ahistorical and schematic; a discussion of kinship in terms of ideas expressed about it. I have tried to illustrate the (ideal) guiding principles of kinship, and the kinds of social grouping and activity organised through kinship as an idiom. I have stressed the association between being a kinsperson and giving and receiving material resources. Set against that is a general individualism in agricultural production, but one that involves a complementarity between male and female activities.

The number of kin categories being fairly few and very inclusive, there are usually many possible individuals from whom resources can be demanded. And at different stages in an individual's life matrikin and marriage ties assume more or less prominence. Fifty years ago Audrey Richards defined the Bemba ulupwa as that group of persons with whom an individual chooses to live (1940a, p.89), a definition which would hold reasonably well for the Ushi in 1988: kinship principles do not strongly specify particular individuals with whom one must interact<sup>58</sup>. The structure of Ushi kinship allows for great fluidity in the pursuit of strategies for day-to-day material and social survival.

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<sup>58</sup> Richards saw this fluidity as premised on an even balance of patrilineal and matrilineal ties for the Bemba (1940a, p.89); bashibo and banalume had equal authority over children. The Ushi case would seem similar, distinguishing them from the more strongly matrilineal peoples such as the Lunda and Kaonde. The kinship terminology gives greater emphasis to relations with fathers than in either of these cases: for example, as with the Bemba, FZ is distinguished by the term mayosenge, a person having some parental responsibilities toward BD and BS.

I shall later contrast this fluidity for social interaction and potential access to resources with the rigidity of social categories, allied to a focus on production, rather than distribution, deployed by development institutions. This is a problem with the analytical armoury of institutions. Paradoxically, in terms of social biography, the problem seems to be reversed. Kinship provides a predetermined structure which, in the long-term, constrains movement between statuses. Yet the meritocratic status of the "progressive" farmer is based on an infinitely variable scale (of production levels) and makes no reference to age or kin status<sup>59</sup>. These are two rather different sets of problem, but which cannot be seen as unrelated in a discourse analysis of development.

The aim of the following chapters will be to elaborate the relationships between production and distribution, thereby problematising some of the "ideal" principles expressed here, with historical attention to the uses of cash, the kinds of market available and how they are used, and more generally those areas of production (especially cash maize production) which have recently been considerably influenced by the Zambian state. I will consider how kinship is translated into productive action, and the nature of any differentia between areas of production.

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<sup>59</sup> See chapter 6.

#### Chapter 4: The social organisation of production

The aim of the preceeding chapter was to introduce kinship as a major organising principle underlying Ushi life in its social and economic aspects. It will act as a background to the discussion in this and the following chapter of how resource use actually was organised in Mabumba in 1987-88. Other influences on how people obtain and use resources will be considered, and how these interplay with kinship; particularly forms of production introduced and supported by government institutions. Critically, I will begin to argue that the political economy of Mabumba, as oriented by kinship, is strongly focused on the distribution of resources, whereas new forms of production encouraged by institutions are conceived of by those institutions essentially in terms of the productive processes. Thus I introduce the terms "distributionist" and "productionist" to begin to characterise the perspectives from which villagers and institutions differentially perceive agriculture.

##### Labour.

Labour is a reasonable heading under which to begin discussion of how production and distribution of resources is organised socially. In a commonsense way it is the process through which products for distribution come into being. In an analytical sense it is one of the key terms in a materialist approach to political economy, and I will take up some theoretical points made from such a perspective about how the labour processes in rural Zambian societies are influenced by the admixture of forces and relations of production having their origin in different modes of production. What I wish to add to these analyses is a fuller account of the complex variety of

forms and processes of labour which existed in Mabumba in the late 1980s, tracing how villagers conceptualised them, to illustrate how labour has discursive as well as materialist underpinnings. I will be showing that labour processes conduce toward a number of ends, such that analytical distinctions between production<sup>1</sup> and distribution must be made with circumspection, and that these relate to important differentia between selling products for cash in a general sense, and selling of state supported production on official markets: ways of conceptualising and using labour cannot be divorced from institutional power and activities, and institution-led production is as much a discursive presence as a substantive one. As in other chapters, I will argue that in the areas of Mabumba chiefdom in which government presence is strong, the productionist/capitalist senses of labour are beginning to gain ground in forms of production other than maize cash cropping.

A useful thematic introduction to labour is the subject of productive individualism; empirically evident to anyone who visits a village in Luapula, yet fraught with interpretative difficulties.

#### The nature of productive individualism.

Productive individualism has been a strong theme in much recent literature on matrilineal societies in Zambia (Crehan, 1987 and Poewe, 1976; 1981). Empirically, my data for Mabumba support observations from other similar societies. Two sorts of explanation have been put forward for marked productive individualism, where

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<sup>1</sup> Production is used here to mean productive processes, as distinct from consumption.

kinship obligations require wide consumer sharing of the product. Poewe argues for it being a characteristic of matriliney, where there is already significant capitalist influence at the level of circulation of products. Within the household, it is not in the interests of wives or sons to increase the husband/father's patrimony, since he belongs to a different matrilineage, and on death his possessions will be distributed among his matrikin. In a wider historical and societal context she argues there has been a decline in cooperative labour within matrilineages associated with a rise in entrepreneurship: the logic of capitalism is such that owners of the means of production must accumulate surplus; to do so means reducing the drain of resources to a wide circle of matrikin. Poewe sees the adoption of certain Protestant ideologies (especially as realised in the Seventh Day Adventist church and the Jehovah's Witnesses) as legitimisation for the retention of resources within the nuclear family (rather as Long does, 1968). As I argue in chapter 8, the evidence for such an ideological shift in Mabumba is equivocal.

There are some problems with this causal explanation for productive individualism, which can be identified empirically in Mabumba. The argument focuses only on the conjugal household, treated as a production unit. I would have production unit as an analytical category which can have very different kinds of membership depending on context; as we shall see, it is perhaps more accurate to think of "household" in Mabumba as a unit premised on the distribution of resources which may be identical with the production unit, but which is likely to contain different production units as subsets. So, to characterise productive individualism from the perspective of marriage can be misleading. A further limitation with the argument

for Mabumba is that there is very little in the way of heritable property, so household relations cannot really be understood in terms of future expectations through inheritance.

An alternative rationale explaining productive individualism is one which considers the logic of different systems of production. Recent Marxist literature (e.g. Gibbon and Neocosmos, 1985) has treated peasant production systems, in which producers own the means of production, as systems of petty commodity production. In this view, the agricultural domestic community generates use values, whilst capitalist relations of production (already present in varying degrees in most peasant societies) produce exchange values. Within the "domestic" mode of production it follows logically from producers remaining in possession of the means of production that it is a problem for them to gain access to any labour other than their own. In contrast, in capitalist production labour is divorced from the means of production. As I shall argue, this theoretical distinction goes part way to accounting for cooperativeness (in the sense of hired labour) in the production of commodities like hybrid maize, set against a distinct lack of it in the production of subsistence crops, and avoids certain strains in arguments about matriliney as political economy, since it allows for similar productive individualism in both matrilineal and patrilineal societies.

The logic of the production mode is not sufficient though to account for productive individualism. There are undoubtedly more pragmatic reasons why people wish to keep what they do to themselves, (in terms of talking about it or making their activities visible) which are to do with the social proscription of unorthodox behaviour.

As discussed in chapter 2, people in Mabumba can be seen to be actively experimental in agriculture; yet what an individual knows, or discovers for him or herself, is not widely disseminated to others (except perhaps a close kinsman from whom some future patronage might thereby be encouraged). As I have suggested in chapter 3, village life revolves around the distributive use of resources in which there is a continuing, loosely reckoned set of reciprocations which happen through very inclusive though contextually alterable sets of relationships. One form of behaviour reckoned aberrant is for someone to produce markedly more of a resource than anyone else, with the possibility of using it selfishly, rather than distributing it in the prescribed manner. With the current state of the Zambian economy (a trend originating in the 1970s), pressures are such as to make it tempting for anyone with surplus production to sell for cash; and for the possible distributive beneficiaries to be doubly annoyed at not seeing any benefits accrue to them.

These feelings are most closely observable in Mabumba in connection with finger millet. It is unanimously observed by the villagers that production of the crop has greatly declined since the 1950s because of the increasing scarcity of trees for citemene fields. Beer production (see below) is much lower in the central villages of the chiefdom, and stocks of grain run out earlier in the year than used to be the case<sup>2</sup>. Anyone now with an abundance of finger millet (obtained by whatever means) is the subject of jealousy. I even heard of cases where people known to be unusually successful growers

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<sup>2</sup> The 1987 harvest in chief Mabumba's village was completely exhausted by the beginning of May 1988.



had their fields "mysteriously" burned shortly before harvest. More generally, it was stressed to me that though group labour could be used to cut branches for citemene (ukutema), the owner of a field would take sole responsibility for later operations for fear of the crop being sabotaged by others. Though I began here by alluding to preservation of agricultural knowledge individualistically (a point dealt with in great detail by Fairhead for the Bwisha in Zaire, pers. comm.), what matters is quantity of end product and how that is used. The case of finger millet in Mabumba points to the need to problematise "productive individualism" carefully. Some form of collective labour is employed, in which the participants circuitously have an interest in the product (they still commonly are paid with beer made from the previous year's millet harvest, see below). Yet later field practices are highly individualised. Other writers have tended to use the label "productive individualism" in a more encompassing way, without looking at different stages of the agricultural cycle (for example, Poewe, 1981). Nor have they considered how productive individualism may have different meanings for different crops, as we shall see in relation to maize.

Another form of differentiation must also be made. Wanting to keep production both quiet and physically separated from others (in the sense of restricting others from visiting one's fields and observing one's activities) can have two rather different rationales, which might be distinguished historically. It has always (in the sense of immemorially) been the case that someone producing more of a crop than others, and particularly having a bigger or fuller finger millet granary (ubutala), could be accused of stealing from others through "supernatural" means, unless that person were to be generous and

distribute the product equitably among all kin with potential rights to make demands on him<sup>3</sup>.

In this form of sorcery, icishibilo, the accused was said to put an object (a bat, snake, human corpse, etc.) into his field or ubutala, and thereby attract other people's standing crops or grain. The object would go out at night to effect the stealing, and even today some people suspect foul play if an owl is heard hooting near their fields, or a bat is seen flying around the ubutala. To be accused of such sorcery would be most undesirable, since it would entail social ostracism, and even violent retribution.

Keeping production to oneself for fear of direct physical depredations by others (burning and stealing) would seem to have more recent historical roots. Those who were relatively successful millet growers would opine that others who were "lazy" or "bad people" would steal because everyone had become desperate for cash with exorbitantly high prices in the country<sup>4</sup>. Stealing millet has become attractive since it is relatively scarce in the central villages of the chiefdom and is readily saleable for a good price, either in its

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<sup>3</sup> For the same reason, those who have made successful livings on the Copperbelt or in other towns tend to stay away from the village. A man from Mabumba who had a successful printing business in Kitwe had fallen ill after his two previous visits home and put this down to sorcery by jealous relatives. He didn't plan any more visits for some time.

<sup>4</sup> In those villages of Mabumba near the main roads fear of stealing is a more general problem. Nearly all people in the chief's village have locks on their house doors, which one visitor found quite remarkable in comparison with other areas of rural Zambia. Fears of theft centred on the passage of many strangers on the new tarred road, and easy access to the markets in Mansa where thieves could sell contraband; particularly highly prized items such as radios and shoes.

raw state or as beer. One can interpret this as an impetus toward productive individualism which is to do with the infiltration of the capitalist mode of production, in a situation of economic decline. Nonetheless, my point is to stress that "productive individualism" in the form which exists in Mabumba in the late 1980s cannot be seen as unitary or in pseudo-evolutionary terms.

Material which I have on witchcraft and sorcery in relation to agriculture is largely from secondary sources (especially Chilufya, pers. comms.). I came across extremely few accusations of witchcraft, and generally it was not a subject of much intercourse in chief Mabumba's or other central villages in the chiefdom. Thus, I do not treat either witchcraft or sorcery at length in this thesis<sup>5</sup>. It has figured as a very pervasive force in many other Central African societies, and in Zambia has been discussed notably by Marwick (1965) for Eastern Province and Turner (1968) in Northwestern Province<sup>6</sup>. Commonly it is asserted that witchcraft accusations have tended to proliferate in relation to internecine conflict occasioned by increased population density and economic straits (e.g. Colson and Scudder, 1988, p.38). A rather different interpretation can be put

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<sup>5</sup> The reasons for lack of attention to witchcraft in the area where most field work was conducted are discussed below. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that my association with a government institution (ARPT) influenced what people perceived my interests to be (maize by default), and certain areas of local discourse (witchcraft in relation to food crops) were not made as open as they might have been somewhere less involved with government intervention, or if my status had been different.

<sup>6</sup> Marwick reports a form of sorcery called nfumba yacimanga among the Cewa similar to cishibilo, whereby sorcerers are thought to steal standing crops of maize or grain from granaries. They are also said to force others to work for them at night without their knowledge (1965, pp. 70 and 76).

on the situation in the centre of Mabumba chiefdom.

This difference I see as to do with the mental and practical dissociation of cash maize from other forms of agricultural production in Mabumba (I discuss this separation in terms of technical requirements in chapter 2; and in relation to notions of disease in chapter 9). Maize thefts attributed to the second rationale outlined above were relatively common; yet I never found sorcery invoked in connection with maize. Why should this be so?

The dependence on external, government assistance seems reflected in the idea that notable yields in maize depend on good field management and the correct application of inputs as advised by extensioners, not on the old associations which food crops have. Villagers also know that cash maize growing is a successful practice introduced by colonialists, who had no belief in the efficacy of sorcery; nor does the post-independence government (at least officially).

It is important also that, with a few exceptions (detailed below), most maize growers in Mabumba are fairly homogeneous in the areas and quantities they grow, and empirical grounds for jealousy are rare. One must take care, though, not to overstate the separation. Most discussion of sorcery I heard in Mabumba concerned a notable businessman in Mansa, the owner of two shops and evidently the richest black Zambian in the provincial capital. It was believed by many that he obtained the power to accumulate his riches through abducting and killing young men and removing their hearts and

genitals<sup>7</sup>. Similar sorts of accusation were voiced by some against two maize growers in the chiefdom. These two were exceptional in the amount of maize grown (upwards of 25 hectare each), were returned labour migrants from the Copperbelt, and kept themselves in separate hamlets with their wives and children and a few other ulupwa members. They tended to keep themselves aloof from the rest of the community and were not popular. Having said this, it was only some of the older residents of a nearby village, not themselves maize growers, who accused these men of achieving high maize yields through sorcery. Most younger people put their achievements down to hard work.

Overall, the impression is that in the central villages of the chiefdom in which maize production has been promoted and supported, accusations of crop theft through sorcery have been dying out. Elsewhere, in the absence of cash maize and state influence, they remain more common (Chilufya, pers. comm.). The possibility of interpreting exceptional performance as due to sorcery remains, though, and whether such interpretations in relation to maize will increase or become extinct is an open question, since maize cash cropping is such a new activity. Elsewhere in Zambia, there is evidence that accusations of theft by sorcery have increased once maize cash cropping is well established (Seur, pers. comm.).

Having discussed productive individualism as a general aspect of labour in Mabumba, gender should be the next fundamental consideration, since it is a principle underlying how one gains access to labour (as introduced in chapter 3 on kinship) to fulfil subsistence

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<sup>7</sup> See also chapter 9 on associations between power, maleness and the reproductive organs.

requirements. Further, it underpins the organisation of labour when a person's own capabilities (or the combined labour of husband and wife) are not sufficient to meet production desires. Because some important points need to be made about the discursive separateness of cash maize production, the way this activity relates to others in terms of labour will be introduced later.

#### Gender and labour.

In agreement with Crehan (1987, p. 140) I would say that one must begin an analysis of production from the individual male and female producer. Already we have seen that productive processes in general are individualistic. What is perhaps more important is that male and female productive activities are not identical, and that all individuals need access to the products of both to meet their subsistence requirements. There is a gender division of labour, but one which must not be over schematised. At the same time, state supported production has brought new possibilities which are altering the shape of interaction between male and female activities, so there is a need to historicise analysis of labour and gender.

The basic divisions between male and female activities are very similar to those recorded elsewhere in Zambia, so I will not dwell on them extensively. In a general sense male activities are of an intermittent, one-off nature, requiring, or construed as requiring, strength and bravery; whilst women's activities, more strongly associated with the house, are more sustained and "nurturant", requiring strength of a sort which would be described in English as

stamina<sup>a</sup>. These ideas are succinctly expressed in indigenous notions of conception and reproduction. When asking why the mother's clan was so revered among the Ushi, one old male informant said that whilst the father's clan was important because men had the power (maka) to create life, it was women who nurtured the child, both in the womb (ifumo) and subsequently, so the mother's clan should be respected for all the hard work which women do.

It is still the case, where citemene fields are concerned, that men say they prepare fields for women (which for adult men will most often mean their wives) (c.f. Richards, 1939, p.189), as well as for themselves. On permanent field types men do most of the digging (ukutipa), especially in fisebe where there is much vegetation to remove. Women do some of this work too, especially on ififuka and mabala which are to be mounded, but it is reckoned very tough work which is better done by men (both men and women expressed this idea). In relation to this, it was said that women who had little access to male labour (for reasons to be discussed below) were the people who tended to have the smallest cultivated areas, male labour being the limiting factor for expansion.

The bulk of subsequent work on food crops is performed by women, especially weeding and harvesting, though this is not exclusively the

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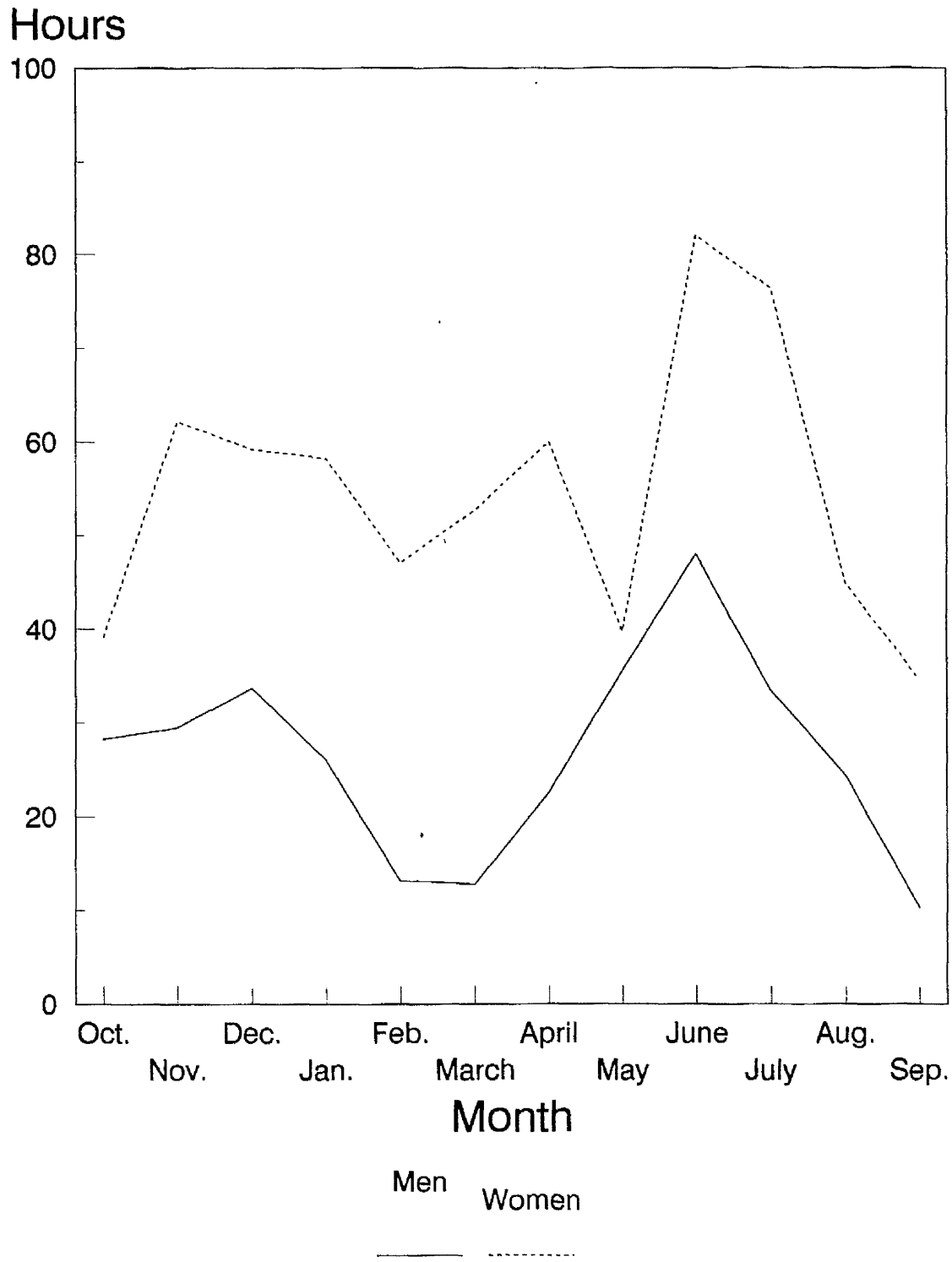
<sup>a</sup> A fuller account of these activities is given in appendix 1. A similar division is noted by many other Africanists. Richards found similar attitudes among the Bemba in the 1930s: male cutting of tree branches as a brave, dangerous activity (1939, p.291), contrasted with women's work as more sustained (op. cit. p.390). Crehan has taken up conceptual aspects of the division of labour for the Kaonde (1987, chs. 6 and 11), whilst, in a completely different region of Africa (Sierra Leone) Leach has found a producer/sustainer distinction a useful one for thinking about gender and labour (pers. comm.).

case. Quantitative data collected by Kay in the 1960s, and by ARPT in the 1980s, are illustrative. Figures 2 to 5d below show the division of labour as apprehended through the ARPT labour survey in Mabumba. The differences between male and female inputs are shown generally, and in relation to specific crops (maize and cassava), and tasks (clearing and cultivation; planting; weeding and harvesting).



**Figure 2:**

**Mean aggregate times spent on agricultural tasks  
by men and women in Mabumba.**

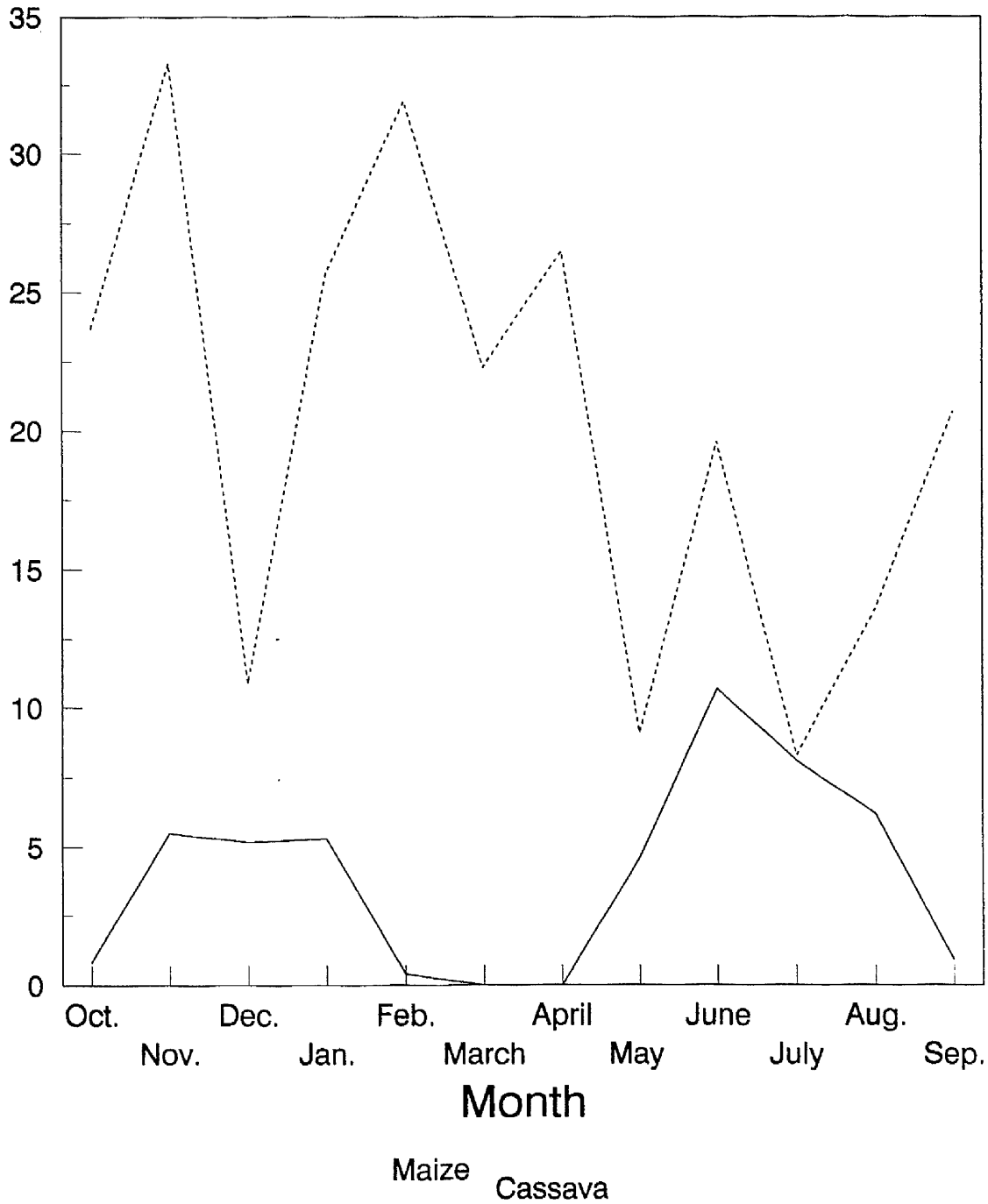


Source: ARPT Labour Survey, Mabumba, 1986-87.

**Figure 3:**

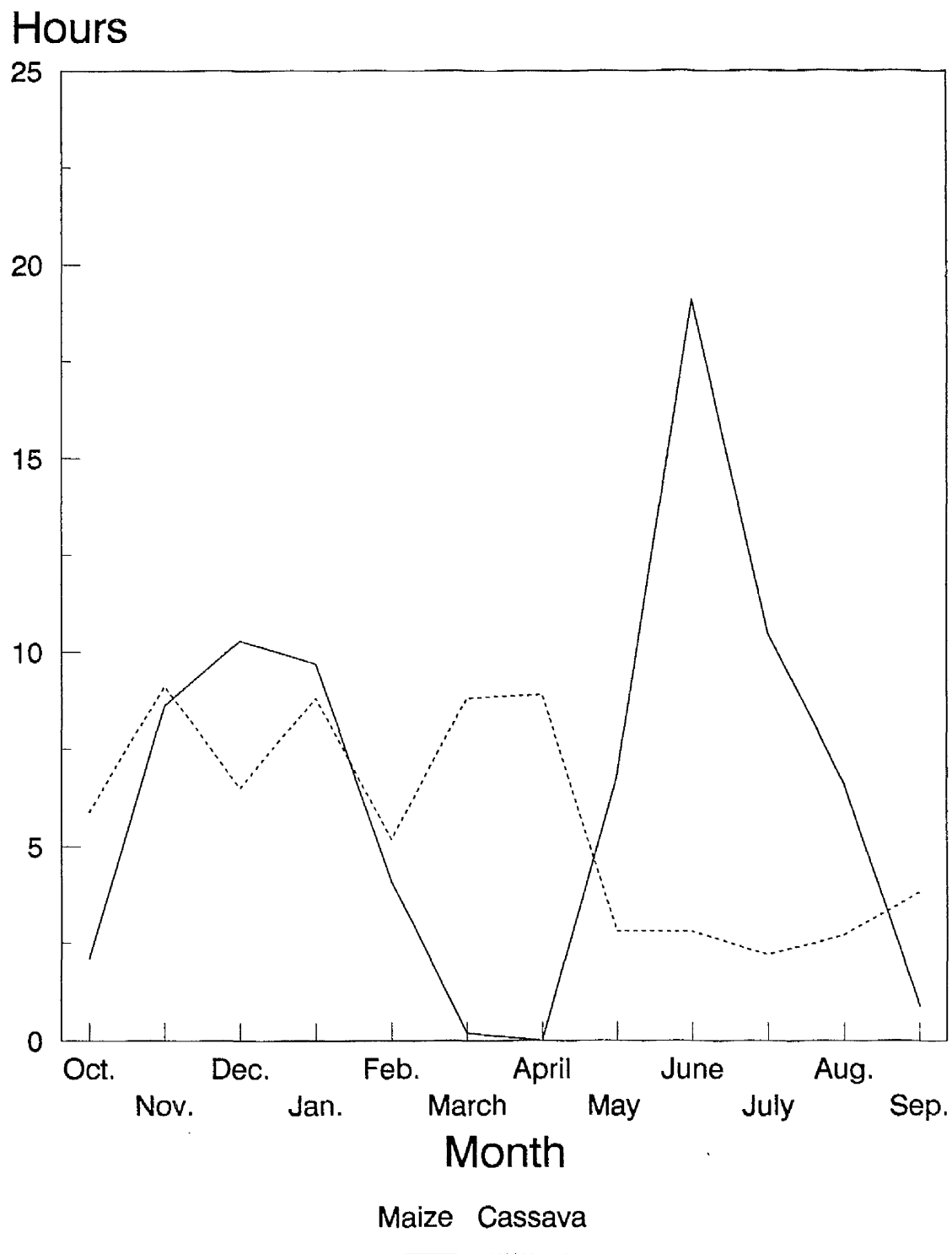
**Total hours per adult female: maize and cassava compared.**

Hours



Source: ARPT Labour Survey, Mabumba, 1986-87.

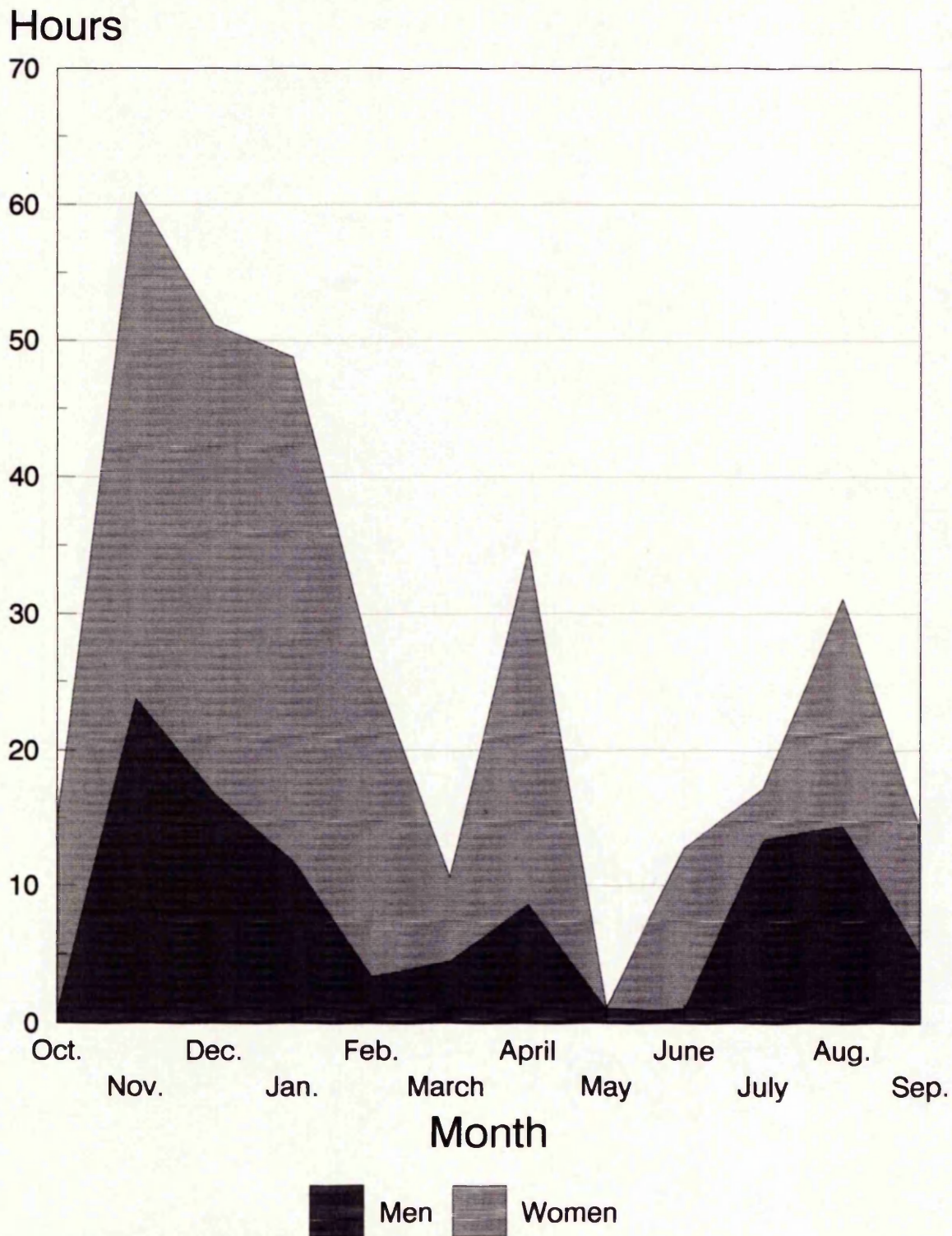
**Figure 4:**  
Total hours per adult male: maize and cassava  
compared.



Source: ARPT Labour Survey, Mabumba, 1986-87.

**Figure 5a:**

**The sexual division of labour in agriculture:  
clearing and cultivation.**

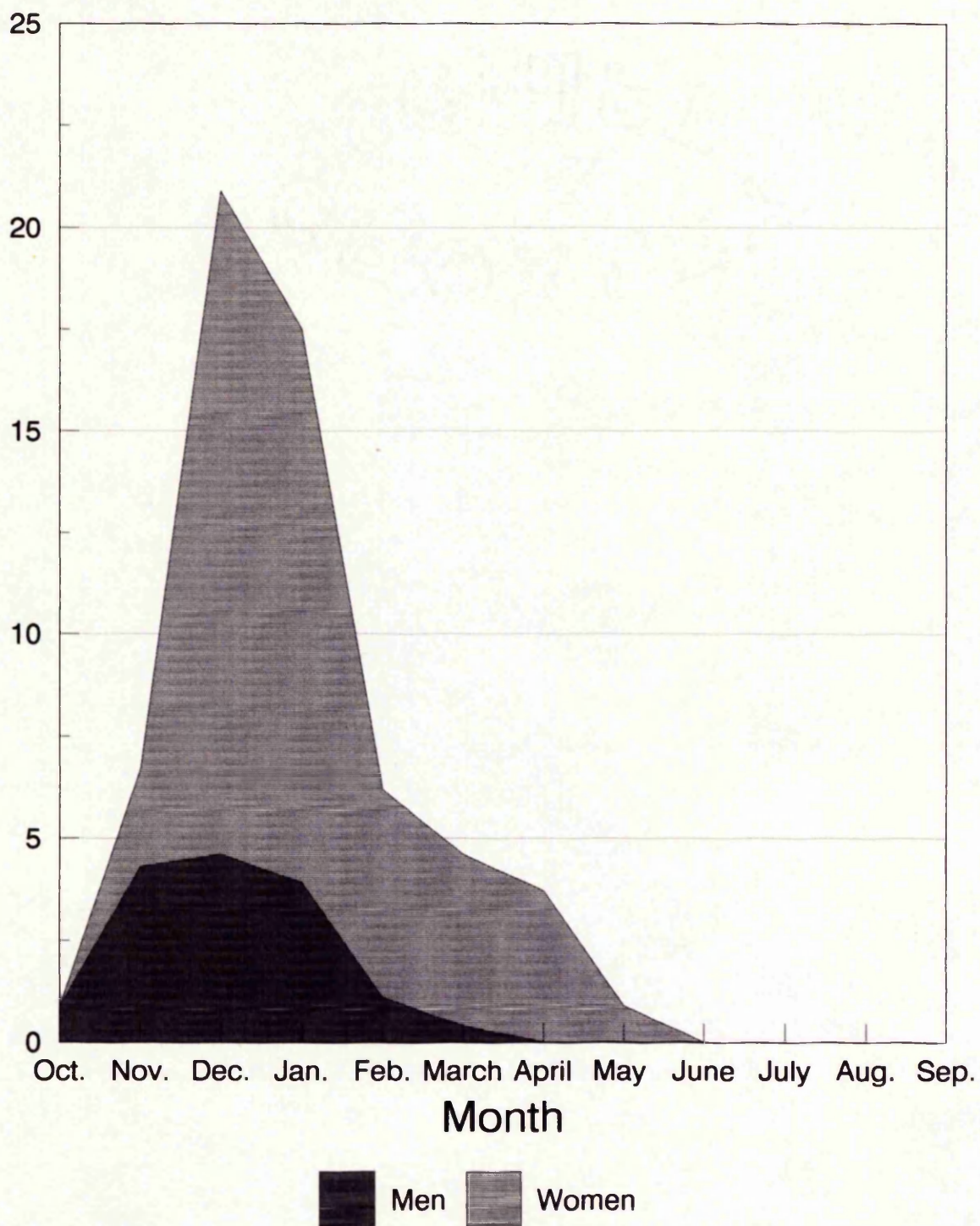


Source: ARPT Labour Survey, Mabumba, 1986-87.

**Figure 5b:**

**The sexual division of labour in agriculture:  
planting.**

hours

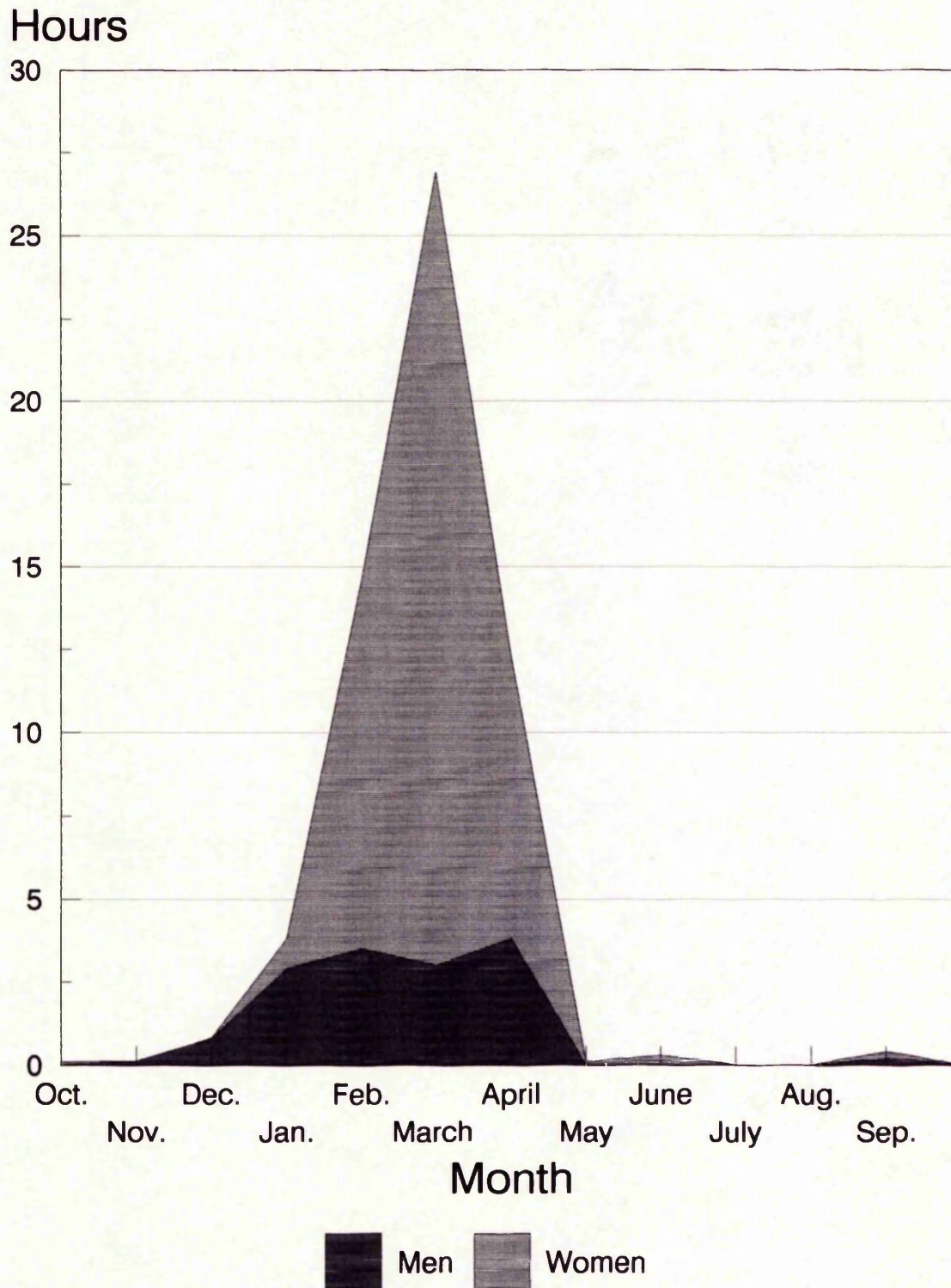


Source: ARPT Labour Survey, Mabumba, 1986-87.



**Figure 5c:**

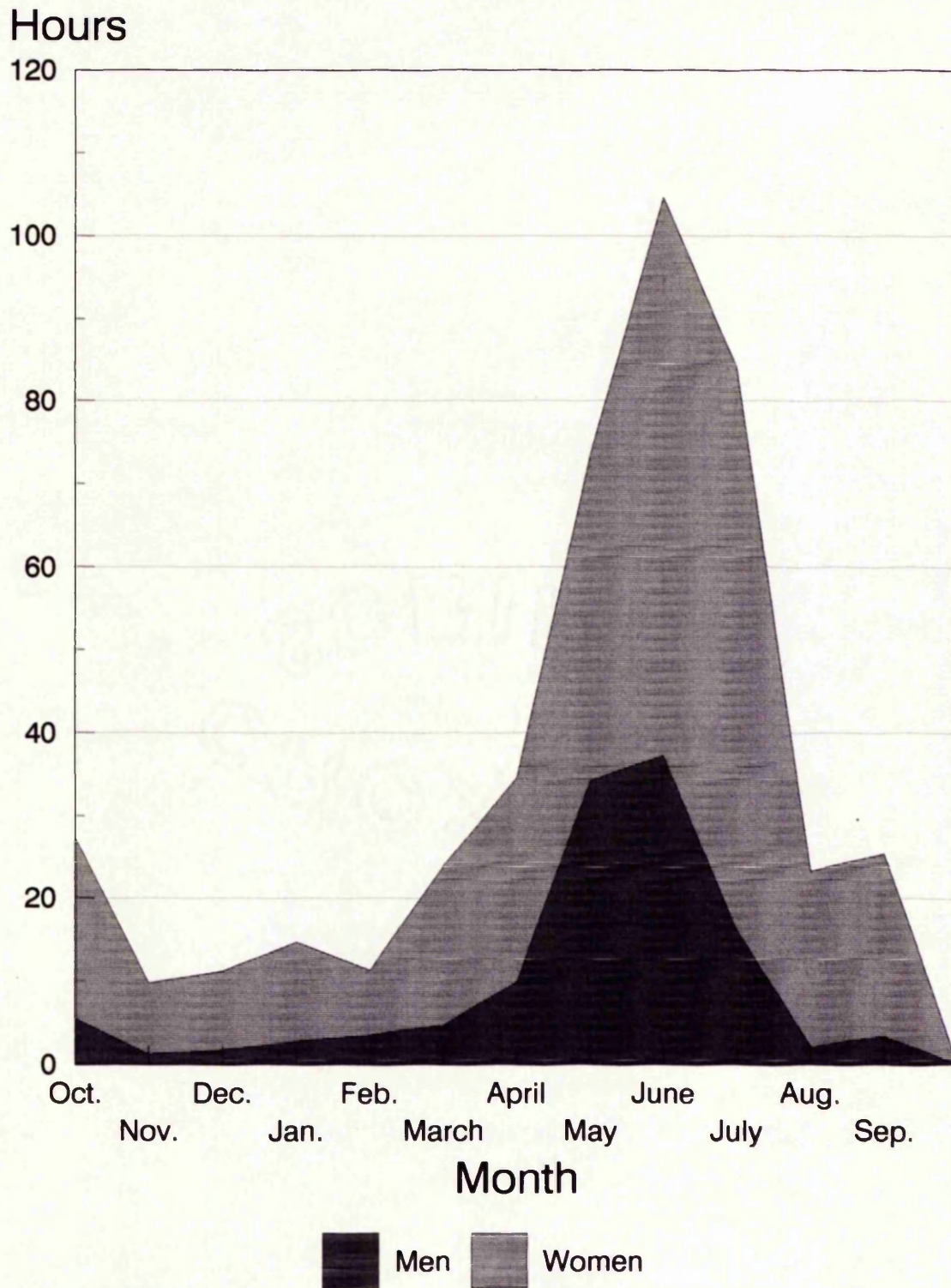
**The sexual division of labour in agriculture:  
weeding.**



Source: ARPT Labour Survey, Mabumba, 1986-87.

**Figure 5d:**

**The sexual division of labour in agriculture:  
harvesting.**



Source: ARPT Labour Survey, Mabumba, 1986-87.

Notes to figures 2 to 5d.

Figure 5a may appear to contradict the text on the point that men are responsible for cultivation. It remains the case that men are solely responsible for cutting citemene, whereas women are much more involved in the cultivation of other field types. It is still true that men do much of the initial digging, especially in fisebe where there may be much vegetation to remove.

Figures 5a to 5d show mean times per adult male and female for the various tasks. These are times for all crops and should not be confused with the data on maize and cassava alone presented in figures 3 and 4.

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Broadly speaking, whether married or not, men and women have their own fields and in principle have sole rights over the way those fields are managed and the fruits thereof distributed. This means that most food crop fields are under the control of women. During this century, men's activities for earning a cash income have shifted from a mixture of labour migration and artesanal work to the latter and maize farming; with a decline through the period of the prestige male activity hunting. Men could rely on being fed by wives or female matrikin in return for the basic duty of clothing and housing these women (c.f. Richards A.I., 1939, p.133), and, until recently, little possibility existed of earning money from food crops, so men looked elsewhere for sources of cash.

A limitation with the sorts of data produced by ARPT is that they do not reveal contextual shifts between male and female labour<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> See also chapter 10 for a critique of ARPT's work.



In the conjugal setting<sup>10</sup>, the kinds of overlap between male and female activities are strongly associated with the stage of development of the household and its relative resource base. Early in marriage (after the period of brideservice) there is a relatively high degree of husband-wife cooperation since neither partner has the seniority allowing them to demand services from many matrikin (and this will be confounded with whose matrikin the couple are living near); nor, since they are expected to begin farming independently from the parental generation, do they often have the resources (money or commodities) with which to attract much non-kin labour<sup>11</sup>. Under these circumstances, it is common, for example, for a husband to assist his wife with the hard work of lifting groundnuts (imbalala), though she will probably do all the collecting from the fields herself. At the same time, young married couples are the group most heavily involved in cash maize production (usually the husband), and certain shifts have been engendered by increasing time requirements for maize. This can mean that a husband will assist his wife with cassava, groundnut and bean planting if her help with his maize crop

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<sup>10</sup> I do not raise the issue of polygamy, since it had become very rare in Mabumba by 1988, and strongly proscribed by the churches. Apart from the chief himself, who had three wives, I came across only two other men with more than one wife (in the chief's village, with a population in excess of one thousand). The arrangement in both these cases was that the wives lived in households in different villages, and the husband travelled between them. One wife might be in Mabumba, at the heart of the chiefdom's social life; the other in a more remote place where the husband could begin a sizeable maize farm. In none of these cases did I find significant cooperation (or even interaction) between cowives. Essentially they belonged to separate households with one overlapping member. Polygamy no longer seems to be a significant means for men to build political and economic status in Mabumba.

<sup>11</sup> See below for discussion of the senses in which money has become a reward for labour, and the differences between cooperation between kin and "paid" labour.

means that her food crop work is delayed. More often than not, though, the shift is toward the husband's interest in maize, which can have deleterious effects on food production, as will be discussed later.

In more senior conjugal settings it is usual to find a greater deal of separation between husbands' and wives' agricultural activities. Certainly by the time people reach their forties there should be several able bodied children of both sexes who will assist their parents in the fields, as well maybe as others in the towns who send money home. And the labour of junior matrikin (in respect separately of each partner) can be called on, usually in return for some form of non-monetary payment, such as food and shelter. It is common at this stage of life to find husband and wife farming quite independently, the wife obtaining male labour (if not from her children or other matrikin) through money or commodities rather than her husband, though she would be expected to continue to feed him. Almost exclusively within this group (age 40-65) I found households in which husband and wife maintained cash maize farms entirely independently of one another. By the time a woman is past menopause she is considerably freer to pursue her own interests than earlier in life. Whether married or not, she will often show considerable autonomy and enterprise in economic activity, and be interested in cooperative practices with other women outside the control of men (see chapter 8). Additionally, most people currently in this group have benefitted more or less directly from urban connections, in which case they may have built up a capital base from which farming may be expanded through piece work labour.

So, within the "conjugal household", as stated in the previous chapter, the primary means of access to complementary labour for subsistence is the spouse, at least until such time as personal resources reach a level at which production can be attained by independent means, though complementary needs continue to be met at the level of exchange, unless serious conflict develops between spouses. Preparation of food by women for men (or for men to distribute to others) remains an important mark of respect in Ushi society. A sure sign of difficulties in a marriage is when it publicly becomes known that a wife is refusing to cook for her husband. It is important, though, as we saw in the previous chapter, that marriage is relatively fragile, and divorce an easy matter. Beyond reproductive age matrilineal status may make remaining single more attractive than having a husband, and over half the women in this age group were living as heads of households, where female-headed households are only 27 per cent of all households in Mabumba. Unmarried people rely mainly on matrikin for the necessary complementation of male and female labour, at least for subsistence production. One particular group of kin in Chipanta is illustrative. Betty Musenga<sup>12</sup> (a mayosenge of Sebastiano) was born in Chishinga country to the north, where she had married, but Chipanta was her mother's birthplace. She was advised by her husband's ulupwa to return to her own matrikin when he became demented. Though these relatives of hers were to be found in Chipanta, she had had little contact with them, so, knowing that she could not initially rely on their support (as she explained to me), she brought with her her one

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<sup>12</sup> See appendix 2. G and 2. H: head of household living in house 29.

remaining unmarried son, Raban<sup>13</sup>, and a married daughter, Paulina, who was having some problems with her husband<sup>14</sup>. As her son-in-law was a town dweller he could not appropriately open citemene fields as brideservice. Instead, he paid for the bricklaying for Betty's new house in Chipanta. If Betty were still effectively married, this duty would have been expected first of her husband. The land which Betty was using had been handed over to her by a sister (munyina) who had been in the village for some time. She gave some of this for Paulina to use, and some to Raban. They farmed together, she said, as none of them had the services of a spouse. Raban dug his mother's food crop fields, and she fed him, whilst he used his own portion of land to establish a cash maize farm, and gave some of the money raised to Betty. Paulina had her own food crop fields, the products of which were used to feed herself and her children, giving some also to Betty.

Cassava harvesting and processing Betty and Paulina did for each other, it being the most laborious of their tasks throughout the year. Most of the labour they each required was obtained in this way, and Betty also received some cash from her married children in town, which she would use to pay for piecework. Occasionally both she and Paulina brewed beer for sale, and the money so raised could be used to pay male labour for opening new fields, as Raban did not have enough time to attend to his maize enterprise and do all the new land preparation that they needed. The beer was sold first, rather

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<sup>13</sup> See appendix 2 G and 2 H: living alone in house 28.

<sup>14</sup> See chapter 3 for the example of Paulina and the fragility of marriage.

than directly used to pay for labour, as they did not have any citemene fields<sup>15</sup>. Paulina grew the millet from which this beer was brewed, on a small cisebe, and saw this as a limitation to expanding crop production: she could not make enough beer to attract the labour for preparing a large citemene field.

This example approximates what I have defined as a household in the previous chapter (the immediate sphere of production and distribution of subsistence resources) and shows well the primary nature of the core mother-siblings-children association. Questioned as to whether Raban's eventual marriage would bring hardship, Betty replied no, because if he married in the vicinity she could rely on continued support even if he was providing labour for in-laws (duties of a son to a mother being a strongly emphasised element in Ushi kin relations; and a son can at all times rely on being fed by his mother). If he married away she could expect some remittances, whilst she had one other married son in the next village whom she could call on to help with digging, or to bring harvested crops back from the fields. As importantly, during the five years since her arrival in Chipanta she had built relations with her other kin, and like many grandmothers looked after her matrilineal grandchildren (beshikulu) while their parents were in the fields, and could soon expect some returns of labour from the older of these relatives.

The picture given so far is of quite successful achievement of subsistence production, in both conjugal and non-conjugal households. This must be modified as there are a number of people in Mabumba who struggle to maintain even the most modest of rural lifestyles,

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<sup>15</sup> See below on forms of reward for labour.

regardless of the effects of an unpredictable natural environment (which can affect anyone). These people can be equated with some of those whom government institutions would gloss as female-headed households<sup>16</sup>. They are usually senior women who have outlived husbands and junior kin, or young, single women with children who do not live near their matrikin. When facing hardship, the primary, and easiest strategy to adopt is to make demands for help on those kin with an obligation to assist. In the absence of such kin, products or labour can only be obtained through some material form of payment, so the poor away from their relatives are in a double bind.

There were several very old women in Chipanta who barely eked out an existence, relying on their own small supply of cassava and vegetable relishes, in some cases receiving occasional gifts from visiting relatives. These people were often the object of the charitable activities of the various churches (see chapter 8). Exactly why there were no old men in similar circumstances is not clear. It seems most of them whose wives had died were members of locally important matrilineages. Since adult men do not feed themselves (to be respected as elder men, they must be seen to be fed by women), it seems that widowers either remarry or return to their matrikin.

The latter group, of young women, were a larger presence in the village. Rosemary was a popular figure familiar at Mabumba market, and latterly at one of the two village bars, yet her circumstances were amongst the most difficult of anyone's. Her husband had left

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Since Betty's household would also be classed as female-headed, this is a comment on governmental typologies which tend to homogenise all such "units" as a distinct underclass in rural society.

her with four children, one of whom was crippled and needed to be carried around. Only her mother<sup>17</sup> was present in Chipanta, who was now quite old and feeble. Rosemary could barely manage to grow enough food on her own. She had taken to selling other people's vegetables at the market for a meagre profit margin, and subsequently took a barmaid's job to get desperately needed cash for clothes and household items, and for the necessary male labour to prepare new land (she also brewed and sold munkoyo from time to time). The disadvantage of the bar job was that it allowed her only three mornings per week in her fields, and in 1988 she managed to plant only cassava and groundnuts.

Rosemary depended on earned petty cash to obtain any commodities and a minimal amount of male labour, sufficient to help dig a few permanent gardens. She would, in Karla Poewe's schema, be classified in the poorest of four incipient classes: the rural proletarians (1981, p.90). Her misfortune cannot be stated unequivocally, though. Still being in her mid twenties she had a fair chance of marrying again. Yet whether this would be in the village was doubtful. Her adoption of petty trading to earn a living had come through experience of living in Mansa for a time, and what she was doing was recognised as an urban pattern of living. This was most true of being a barmaid, which has connotations of loose living (drinking and likelihood of prostitution). In the villages such behaviours are frowned upon (albeit to some extent hypocritically): Rosemary was popular with patrons of the village bar, but not an attractive marriage prospect.

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<sup>17</sup> See appendix 2. G: living with a grandson in house 3.

### Outside labour

The discussion so far has concerned the organisation of labour at the "household" level, and in relation specifically to food crops. This is labour which is expected as an aspect of close social bonds. What is needed next is a consideration of how labour is acquired in excess of what can be provided by household members, with attention to the ways in which it can be rewarded. The first point to be made is that the user of a field has sole rights in recruiting labour to work thereon. Thus, in general women are found organising labour for food crop fields; men for maize fields. This is regardless of whether the individuals are married or not; the relative autonomy of husband and wife is preserved throughout the productive process, from initial land preparation to distribution of the product (a further example of the extent of productive individualism). But, since it is of major significance in redefining and redeploying labour requirements, something must be said about cash maize and labour before proceeding.

With the exception of those few large maize farmers who are returned labour migrants, and who can rely on cash income to make up for any shortfall in food production, most people in Mabumba experience cash maize farming as an addition to an already busy agricultural year.

In the early part of the maize extension campaign, the primary targets were young to middle-aged men, so the majority who went into production were conjugal households of reproductive age. Later, women were "targetted", so by the late 1980s a number of what would be defined institutionally as female headed households had also become maize farmers. However, fewer women have become involved (especially those with many dependents) because their time is



absorbed by food crop activities, especially harvesting and processing. In contrast, men's agricultural labour is more skewed throughout the year, and it has been easier for them to add new enterprises to their existing practices<sup>18</sup>.

All people entering cash maize production experience it as highly demanding of labour and it is, by agricultural institutions' standards, a highly labour intensive crop in the absence of mechanisation. The extent to which maize farming has been adopted, and the consequences for other areas of agricultural production, has not been homogeneous, though, for all types of "household"; some aspects of the difference are decidedly to do with ideological aspects of the discourse in which cash maize is situated. In introducing maize here, though, only its more practical, material aspects are examined. Broadly, apart from the very large maize farmers, two categories can be discerned. First, there are those people who must rely mostly on "household" labour, and who almost unexceptionally are receiving input credit from one of the loaning institutions. Second, there are those with scope to employ outside

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<sup>18</sup> According to ARPT Labour surveys for Mabumba, the proportion of agricultural time spent on cash maize in 1986-87 was 9 per cent for all male-headed households and 6 per cent for all female-headed. The relative proportions on food crops were similar for both groups (44.7% and 46.7%, respectively), whilst the total time spent on agricultural activities was the same. These figures do not suggest, so far, a significant trend for cash maize production to displace food production in Mabumba. Considering the individual labour of men and women in all households, the average man spent 25 per cent of his agricultural time on maize, whilst the average woman spent only 7 per cent. In terms of overall inputs to agriculture, the average woman spends twice as many hours as the average man (656 hours versus 317 hours per year). There are difficulties with oversimplifying classifications such as "household by sex of head", but these quantitative data lend some support to qualitative assertions about women being less involved in maize production than men. See figures 3 and 4 for illustration of these points.

labour who may or may not be dependent on government loans. How can these two groups be characterised?

Most members of the first group are young, conjugal households, as discussed earlier, which tend to have a poor capital base, and a fair degree of cooperation between husband and wife. Having relatively little cash, men in such households are the ones who hire themselves out to the more highly capitalised with larger farms<sup>19</sup>. Maize farming tends to be perceived by them as complementary to existing agricultural practices (at least by male household heads). Many of the operations in the maize fields (relatively close to the villages) are performed in the afternoons, so that time spent on the food crops is not reduced. Afternoons were thought of previously by men as relatively free, and spent on socialising or artesanal work. Even some wives said the same, though often they grumbled they had less time for household tasks. The women's perspectives in this group were in general rather different from the men's. Even if they didn't articulate it in a direct manner, they were aware of their food cropping activities being eroded by increasing demands from their husbands that they work on maize. I came across several households where sweet potatoes or groundnuts had yielded very poorly or failed completely, and the wife said this was due to her late planting after maize had been attended to<sup>20</sup> (Sikana reports similar findings in the

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<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, for reasons discussed later, it is unusual for casual labourers on maize farms (the main demand for piece work labour) not to be maize farmers themselves, or at least that they should have been trained specifically about what to do by maize farmers (which would not be expected for other crops).

<sup>20</sup> Lateness confounded by late delivery of maize inputs by the Luapula Cooperative Union.

Northern Province of Zambia: Gatter and Sikana, 1989). In one household no food crop other than cassava was planted in 1987-88 for this same reason. However, this household was not alarmed as the husband had obtained three input loans that year, had a good standing crop, and had calculated that he would have money to buy relishes if need be. Though young female-headed households were much less involved in maize production, those which were reported similar problems, particularly a high incidence of "pops" (empty pods) in groundnuts. Correlatively with displacement in cycles of permanent field food cropping, entry into maize cash cropping tends to encourage lessened or abandoned citemene agriculture, both because of time constraints and attitudes to these different forms of production (see below on the latter point). This in turn means that autonomous possibilities for women to earn cash and secure labour are reduced because of lessened availability of finger millet for brewing. This is a further source of irritation to women in Mabumba.

The primary motivation stated for entering maize production was to earn much needed cash while remaining in the village, in a fairly regular and remunerative way; increasingly necessary with rampant inflation<sup>21</sup> and decline of employment in the urban sector: an opportunity which had not existed before the arrival of extension and programmes such as Lima<sup>22</sup>. The major complaint of young households was that they could not expand production according to their desires, because of scarcity of cash or commodities to pay for labour, the

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<sup>21</sup> Informed sources during field work estimated inflation in Zambia to be running at about 200% (compared with an official government figure of 55% early in 1988).

<sup>22</sup> See chapters 6 and 7.

labour of two spouses not being enough to cultivate more than about three lima (0.75 ha)<sup>23</sup>, varying with the extent of commitment to other forms of production.

This problem did not exist to the same degree for older households (which were mentioned earlier in relation to the gender division of labour), and which constitute the second group of maize farmers. With a greater pool of household labour and capital, they are better able both to enter and expand maize production in a fairly independent way, that independence being between spouses as well as between the household and loaning institutions. The fact of having capital can contribute to senior women's autonomy even if married, since they can use cash to obtain labour for maize, in which case their husbands have no rights in the product. If, on the other hand, a husband prepares land for his wife, irrespective of the crop, he can exert some ultimate right in it (c.f. Richards, 1939, p.191) though this is uncommon where the product is not for sale. Since, as one man aptly put it, "everyone is scrambling now for money in Mabumba", wherever there is a chance to earn money people are quick to realise potential rights. Cash is likewise important in relation to other areas of older women's economic autonomy. It may be used to purchase finger millet to make the beer which remains the chief way of attracting a male work party to open new citemene fields, to grow more finger millet, to make more beer, etc.

A pattern which seems clear, both in Mabumba and elsewhere in

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Other observers note that a requirement for extra-household labour begins if production is to exceed about thirty bags, when a good yield is reckoned to be nine or ten 90kg bags per lima (Henrietta Moore, pers. com., relating to Northern Province).

northern Zambia, is that households expand maize production through increased recruitment of labour<sup>24</sup> (as compared, say, with intensifying production without expansion in area), which by definition must be extra-household (c.f. Sharpe, 1987, p.53), and this in turn has consequences for who is providing labour for whom, in a situation where in the more accessible villages between fifty and eighty per cent of households are now engaged in maize cash cropping<sup>25</sup>. Though I have no detailed information on the relations between maize production, household food stocks and nutritional status, it would seem my observations on household types and maize broadly agree with Sharpe's (op. cit. p.62), though his study concerned an area of Central Province where maize production has a longer history and general production levels are much higher than in Mabumba.

These observations about different types and stages of household development in relation to maize production begin to indicate that there are complicated relationships between maize and other crops, forms of labour payments, and differing interests of men and women between and within households. These matters will now be considered in detail in terms of the relationship between household and non-household labour and forms of reward for labour. It should be remembered that I am continuing to use the term household in the sense defined in the previous chapter, rather than as some form of mutually supportive, self-maximising unit (as often implicit in

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<sup>24</sup> Or, expressed the other way round, that labour is the major constraint on expansion of cash maize farming.

<sup>25</sup> According to my sample survey of villages in Mabumba agricultural camp.

development institutions' analyses, c.f. Sharpe, 1987, p.50). The discussion will bring the focus more fully onto the discursive aspects of cash maize.

#### Rewards for labour.

If one isolates any particular agricultural activity, it is apparent there is usually more than one way of accomplishing it, which will depend on context. For example, the ridging of already cultivated land for cassava might be done jointly by husband and wife in the household if their own labour is sufficient; otherwise by a group of men in exchange for beer; by women or men in exchange for a share in the product; or, as is increasingly the case, for payment with money or scarce commodities such as salt<sup>26</sup>, sugar, soap or cooking oil. More unusually, a group of young men may perform the work reciprocally for each other, though this is tied up with connection to government institutions, and will be considered separately.

In this part of the discussion I will consider what these different contexts amount to, in terms of the meanings attached to rewards for labour, and shifts in the patterning of use of these rewards. I begin with beer, since this is locally described as the longest established means for obtaining labour outside the household.

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<sup>26</sup> Salt is a particularly favoured medium for payment, since it is regarded as essential for the flavour of any dish of relish, is not perishable, and can readily be used in exchange for other commodities, such as dried fish. In the early part of the century the Ushi used to make salt by dilution and evaporation from the ashes of a particular grass (the product was called cifutwe), but this laborious process was abandoned when commercial salt became available from the salt pans in Chinsali and elsewhere.

Beer and its shifting meanings.<sup>27</sup>

Older informants discuss agriculture in the 1930s as a time when most food was obtained from large citemene fields, whose initial preparation depended on large work parties of men who would be rewarded afterwards by beer given by the field owner. To work for someone in this way would expect a return of labour in the same context at some unspecified future time. Some form of cooperative labour was essential to the task if it was to be completed on time, since branches needed to be lopped over an area maybe five times the size of the area to be cropped. Such occasions were a major focus of male social life, as branch cutting was (and is) seen as an expression of male daring and the one agricultural task exclusively male<sup>28</sup>; and the beer to follow an opportunity for bragging and letting off steam. At that time, people did not make beer to sell, and, interestingly, informants did not report its use in ritual contexts, such as making offerings to ancestors, commonly described elsewhere in Zambia (e.g. Colson and Scudder, 1988, p.11). Nor did I see any evidence of such practices in the late 1980s.

The use of beer for male labour in citemene continues, but in a modified form. More capitalised households, especially those involved in maize cash cropping, have moved strongly to using cash and commodities as means of labour payment. If they produce beer it is more often for sale; and if they continue to use citemene fields,

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<sup>27</sup> See appendix 1 for more details of local beers.

<sup>28</sup> Many other writers on rural Zambian societies have found that in a generally malleable sexual division of labour in agriculture the cutting of trees is distinctively male (e.g. Kay, 1964a, p.47; Richards, 1939, ch. 15; Sharpe, 1987, p.51).

these "newer" forms of payment are now acceptable there, as on other types of field. The most widely encountered context of beer being used to reward citemene is within those female headed households not strongly involved in the cash economy and with limited household labour. Thus one head of such a household I found brewing beer to pay for citemene labour, and also for an extended family mother (nyina) to reward men who had been making bricks for her new house. With a need to grow as much of the food for her family as possible, her strategy was to continue to maintain a high proportion of her fields under fitemene, mainly because once prepared these are far less laborious to maintain than "digging gardens" (fisebe and mabala). At the same time, beer for labour is now only acceptable for branch cutting in citemene and occasionally for other land preparation tasks when performed by men (such as ridging). For all other tasks, people demand payment in cash or commodities (see below). Even this woman, and others like her, needed cash for the purchase of "essential" commodities, so she would sell a certain proportion of her millet beers from the house.

As Colson and Scudder document well for the Gwembe Tonga, there has been a distinct shift over the past thirty years or so to the use of village beer as a saleable commodity. In Mabumba this is most marked in the central villages near the main roads; yet, as millet becomes increasingly scarce, those who live in the citemene areas of the more remote bush receive visits from the former seeking purchases of katubi. It is of interest that this beer is the last to have been commoditised; and this very much because it is identified with sharing. It is served to a group in a large calabash, each



participant sipping some through a straw<sup>29</sup>. Other beers, munkoyo and katata, are distributed to individuals by the cupful. Such division into small, standard units, has fitted easily with monetisation. Nevertheless, I saw katubi being sold in the remote villages, mainly to teachers and other government staff who were not engaged in brewing, and who could afford to fill a five or ten litre container<sup>30</sup>, either individually or as a group. This they would then serve in the traditional way (every household has a calabash) to invited guests, as a weekend entertainment, rather as beer drinking in the towns is.

The example brings out how the meaning of beer has been changing in Mabumba. Even when, superficially, it is served in the same way as before, its economic and social associations have changed. It has come to be treated as a commodity, and though I can offer no accurate quantification, the majority of home-produced beer in Mabumba was offered for sale in 1987-88; and the far greater proportion of millet stocks used for brewing, rather than eaten as ubwali<sup>31</sup>. The process seems to have begun when cash became more widely circulated as men

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<sup>29</sup> As Colson and Scudder likewise say for the Gwembe Tonga (1988, p.11), sharing of this kind of beer is also a mark of trust. There are fears that poison may be concealed in the drinking straw, so the owner of the beer will take the first sip to assure others that it is harmless.

<sup>30</sup> This was done by measuring out the concentrated beer with the standard cup, the price being a few ngwee more than for the same quantity of munkoyo or katata. I found on several occasions two lots of beer prepared by one household, one being distributed to "locals" who had helped in the fields, the other to cash bearing "visitors" from the main road villages.

<sup>31</sup> Older informants told me that in the 1930s the bulk of their ubwali was made from finger millet, and it is only since then that cassava has come to be the staple food crop.

migrated for work, and as commercial maize beer (Chibuku) began to be delivered to village bars in the 1960s (c.f. Colson and Scudder, 1988, p.12).

Pottier has pointed out among rural Mambwe that although beer continues to be used to reward labour, it has come to be seen as a final payment, not a moment in continuing cycles of reciprocation (1988, p.104). Similarly, Hedlund and Lundahl (1984, p.64) see the loss of social reciprocation with beer in terms of incipient class formation: it is now dependent groups who provide the labour for middle income farmers, rather than equals in respect of land and labour providing it mutualistically. Whilst there are some similarities in Mabumba, other empirical differences are suggestive of a rather different theoretical orientation in understanding the processes of which changing meanings attached to beer are part.

In focusing on beer and processes of economic differentiation, Hedlund and Lundahl are noticeably silent on gender, and which types of labour are being applied to particular crops. I will proceed in the rest of this chapter to demonstrate that these two issues must necessarily be incorporated in any understanding of the current state of labour organisation. Critically, I will show how discursive associations of maize have implications for the ways people think about and deploy labour, an influence which is underspecified by calling cash maize a commodity in the Marxian sense.

#### The meanings of labour and the meanings of crops

A common theme in older informants' descriptions of agriculture in yesteryear was that large work parties for beer had declined because

people wanted to work more for themselves nowadays (and the products, even of citemene fields, have become marketable). Further, a conscious association was made between this process and an increasing dependence on money, which was always in short supply, more chronically so now because of high prices. This might be seen as straightforward evidence of the influence of capital and the capitalist mode of production. Yet the process must be specified in terms of which crops are under discussion.

The following quotation points toward the discursive distinctiveness of cash maize. It was a response to a general question about how a man (Sebastiano in the previous chapter) chose to reward labour in his fields.

"I would use some beer brewed by my sister to pay for branch cutting in citemene. But definitely, I could not use beer to pay for work on my maize farm".

As to why this was the case:

"You see, cutting citemene is hard work, and people will work fast if they know there is beer to be drunk. They will get excited at the thought of the party, and work any old how. But that doesn't matter, as they only have to cut. It is the owner of the field who must collect and pile the branches; that will matter for how well the crop grows.

Now maize, that is a different matter. If people worked for beer on maize, it would be a disaster. With maize you must be very, very careful how you prepare the land and plant it. You must be disciplined, as each seed must be planted the right distance apart from the others, and the right amount of fertiliser given to each one. If you let people work for beer they would make a mess, and then you would give them all that beer for payment. With money, people will have to do exactly what you say, as you can pay a little or a lot. If they work well you give them what you agreed. If not, you can pay them less."

The influences behind such thought about maize are clearly related to the way government institutions teach and control its production. In chapters 6 and 7 I consider in detail how extension gives instruction

on maize, and that villagers' relationships with extension are dependent where cash maize is concerned. What I have described in chapter 2 are some of the non-discursive properties of the crop which necessarily make its production disciplined and separate from other divisions of village agriculture: dependence on inorganic fertilisers and state produced seed from year to year; narrow limits to the timing of specific cropping operations; and the need to sell to the state monopsony<sup>32</sup>. These are all sources of external dependence, materially based. The point I wish to stress now is that these properties underpin some internal, discursive effects on people's perception of maize which in turn have specific consequences for forms of labour organisation.

In a general sense money is diffusing progressively as means for rewarding labour. Yet the significance of the example is in showing that conceptual properties of maize militate against people allowing the use of alternative forms of reward, and, crucially, that the connection is a discursive, not merely functional one. There is no technical reason why beer should not be used to reward labour in cash maize, as in other crops. Indeed, other authors, accepting the change in meaning of beer to being a final payment, suggest beer tends to continue in such use because it may be the most rational,

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This last requirement is related to the fact that maize is not a staple crop in the province. Though Mabumba villagers increasingly consume state milled mealie meal, household level technology does not exist for the processing of grain into flour, and the few privately owned hammer mills in the area are frequently out of action. Furthermore, the grain types of hybrid and composite maize make them very difficult to pound by hand.

efficient and cheap form of labour payment<sup>33</sup>. Yet people in Mabumba insist it is wrong to use beer for maize labour, and maize alone. This is a positive statement against its use, not a contingent effect of increasing monetisation in the general economy. Nor can it be explained away in a simple causal manner by the fact that finger millet production is declining in Mabumba, with consequent reduction in beer brewing. Obviously, millet availability affects the degree to which beer may be offered as a labour payment; but in explaining why beer should not be used to reward maize labour, informants never adduced shortage of beer as a reason.

The highly specified, quantified, and disciplined way in which maize comes to the village from institutions (in both practical and conceptual senses) can, therefore, be seen to influence how people are thinking about labour. This is not to say that some people do not try to use beer for maize labour: some women short of male labour do. But when they do, there is great potential for ambiguity and conflict. I witnessed one beer party given to pay for ridge making where the host had a row with some of the workers. She had checked, and they appeared (judging by the number of ridges) not to have done their fair share of work ( a judgement almost impossible to make, say, about branch lopping for citemene). She demanded either more labour or a monetary contribution. She could not, according to social protocol, withhold the beer as they were already half-way through drinking it.

In relation to the same set of issues, other Zambian observers have

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<sup>33</sup> Where land is abundant and operations need to be done fairly quickly, e.g. Moore, 1975, p.283.

noticed a tendency for richer villagers to use commodities in paying for labour, rather than cash. The proposed rationale is an economistic one: that supplies of essential commodities are erratic throughout the country, and in remote areas travel costs to reach supplies may be prohibitive except for those better resourced (e.g. Hedlund and Lundahl, 1984, p.64). Unequal access to scarce resources is the outcome, with those having closer links with the towns able to take advantage of those who don't (and the latter not really interested in payment in money because they have nothing to spend it on). In Mabumba, certain of the richer maize growers likewise preferred to use commodities; yet in a situation where there was easy access to the provincial town. Undoubtedly they had advantages over poorer people in having the cash to buy in reasonable bulk, and in pursuing "unofficial" channels to urban goods. However, the reasons for preferring commodities were often more strongly aligned with the discourse of maize.

It is common talk that those (men) most after cash in the village want it to buy beer; there is certainly no alternative form of payment at the bars, whose supply of chibuku is now much less erratic than that of home brews. One particular larger farmer stated that he would rather use commodities (soap and mealie meal) to pay for labour on his maize farm because the men who wanted money were drinkers. They would be careless, slow and slovenly in their work because of this, and so his crop would not be good. "Those kinds of

peasants spoil the crops"<sup>34</sup>. The value of sobriety is one strongly encouraged by the churches who, as we shall see in chapter 8, play a significant role in agricultural development in Mabumba, especially maize farming. It is also encouraged by the Zambian government, not least by its teetotal president, and a common element in the self presentation (hypocritical or otherwise) of those who claim allegiance to national aims.

It is important, and a theme for further exploration later, that cash maize has a particular set of associations: with money, commodities, modernity, sobriety, and a disciplined way of behaving. It cannot be understood simply as a commodity whose value is expressed through money qua universal medium of exchange.

#### The meanings of money.

What the foregoing examples seem to point to is a need very carefully to specify what meanings attach to money in Mabumba in the late 1980s, and that these are connected differentially with various areas of production. I am arguing that money has senses which grow out of the educative processes through which the presence of the state is felt in the village; and to think of it as the medium of exchange of the capitalist economy is insufficient (though the argument can only be made in full after the next chapter, which will consider distribution and marketing of products).

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<sup>34</sup> The English term "peasant" would often be inserted as a derogatory term in Bemba sentences, especially by young men who thought of themselves as progressive, educated members of the community and who resented the interference of their seniors with less formal education.

There remains a strong sense that money is only appropriately used in certain kinds of relations between people. Poewe argued a general tendency for sons and wives in Luapula to want to hire stranger labour, rather than contribute resources to the husband's matriline (1981, p.16). In Mabumba, it is the case that both close relatives and strangers may be hired as labour in maize farming, but the form of payment will differ accordingly. Where relatives are so employed, even alongside non-kin, they would be paid with goods (commodities) whilst the others might be given goods or money. Relatives would never be given money (at least not as labour payment). Thus, one man in his thirties employed two nephews (bepwa)<sup>35</sup> among others to make ridges on his maize farm. The nephews were given new hoes for their labour (bought in Mansa), whilst the others received cash. The reasons for this differentiation would seem to be twofold. First, it is undoubtedly true that money is scarce, and has attached to it the concept "scarcity". People try to retain it, therefore, within the immediate household. To give it to some relatives (for productive labour) would entail laying oneself open to claims from many others, according to matrilineal prescriptions. At the level of logic, the profit motive in capitalist production (of which cash maize production is one example) could not then be fulfilled. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly in discursive terms (as argued below), it is deemed wrong to enter into contractual relations with kin. In a sense, to do so is to deny kinship since, as we saw in the last chapter, kinship demands realisation of a mass of shifting,

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<sup>35</sup> It is important that only very close kin (regarded as ulupwa members) are employed in this context: those whom one can fairly definitely rely on for future help.



uncalculated (and not quantifiable) demands that can be made of very inclusive sets of people<sup>36</sup>. So, if relatives provide labour for maize, the form of reward should not be money (though the goods which are acceptable as payment now are commodities which must themselves, ultimately, be bought, even if they come to the labour employer via kin networks)<sup>37</sup>.

Given the shift to increasing demands for payment with cash, the example given of kin and non-kin alike being employed on a maize farm may look like a potential arena for conflict between productionist and distributionist demands. However, it can be argued that the conflict gets resolved in the interests of productionism without appearing to deny the obligations of distributionism, and this because of the nature of maize growing as an educative discourse. When, for example, nephews and sisters are employed, it is separately from those others who might be paid with cash, so the possibility for arguments between participants about relative payments is

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<sup>36</sup> Crehan and Von Oppen make a similar point: that the kind of indebtedness which contractual relations with government institutions entails (coupled with the possibility of punitive sanctions) is very different from the loose round of indebtedness which characterises the very substance of village relations (1988, p. 131).

<sup>37</sup> Again it is apparent that the relations, empirical and conceptual, between different forms of payment are very complex, so that a clear analytical divide between monetary and non-monetary economy, (or commodities and non-commodities) is unhelpful.

minimised<sup>38</sup> in a practical sense. Part of the reason for doing this is that an explicit aspect of employing close junior kin is to educate them in how to grow maize, so that they may themselves be initiated into this "elite" form of production. Explicit instruction and explanation is only given to those from whom one can expect continued support in future. Thus, kin who are employed on maize farms are usually young men (sometimes women) on the brink of marriage and independence from the parental generation who are among the most enthusiastic adopters of maize (and attractive prospects for the loan giving organisations, particularly the churches who favour youth; see chapter 8). By offering the educational opportunity to enter maize production, senior relatives can expect the possibility of receiving some of the income from the maize in future, so there is a long-term strategic interest at work (which cannot operate with relatives who are already engaged in maize production and who have neither the time nor the inclination to offer their labour to others)<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Employment of labour in maize is very much on a casual basis, so who is working on a particular field may be changed from day to day by the owner. I did not come across any instances of full-time employment: there is as yet no such thing as rural proletarianism in Mabumba. All people are to some degree involved in producing for themselves. Reasons given for not employing such labour is that it would be too expensive and that labour inputs to maize come in a series of distinct peaks, rather than more sustainedly, as with cassava (see diagrams above).

<sup>39</sup> I must stress that only a few of the closest matrilineal relatives would be so employed in maize farming; not all those people who, as we shall see in the next chapter, could expect to be included in distributive networks. In this way, although in a sense distributive expectations are being preserved in maize labour, it is in a quite restricted sense. Furthermore, the richer maize farmer, fearing drains on his resources, will often specifically be against employing any kin.

It is indicative of the value of a discourse style of analysis that money can be expected in gifts between relatives, but not as payment for labour. This is, I suggest, because of the fundamental opposition between a sense of fluidity and harmony in distributionism, set against the linear, quantified calculation of productionism. I have already described how some aspects of maize production are precisely quantified and taught to be reproduced with precision (see chapters 6 and 7 for further detail). This attitude plays into how labour is rewarded, as in the case of Sebastiano describing how monetary payments can be adjusted according to how much maize work has been done, and to what standard; or, on an occasion when I accompanied my research assistant to his maize farm, a young single woman was making ridges for him at the rate of fifty ngwee per ridge (the field being a demarcated half-lima, 25m by 50m).

A sense of linearity is also preserved through cycles of maize production, with an institutional insistence on a one-to-one association between some money and maize. The credit suppliers and extension between them make restrictions so that dependent farmers are strongly encouraged to pay for credit out of the income from the previous season's maize crop; for example, that where a sum is allocated to pay for labour on maize, it will only be paid retrospectively after the crop has been sold to the state. Inputs for maize are "lumpy" investments, and the income at the end of the year is the only lump sum which most villagers obtain among their various activities. The attitude has become inculcated that next year's crop should be financed out of this year's income from maize, and so the end of season payment tends to be kept separate from households' other sources of cash by the producer, and not used on

petty purchases. This is yet another source of anxiety to married women whose husbands grow maize, since the latter will require that day-to-day purchases for the house be made out of their wives' beer and vegetable revenue, whilst the men will want to retain the money from maize initially to pay off any loan, and thereafter to make major purchases, such as manufactured household items, clothes, and (most desirable of all), luxury goods like radios.

The reason that money can also be used in a distributive sense, without contradicting its place in productionism, is that here it takes on a different meaning. It is not used in a contractual, quantified way (which would deny kinship), but in small, unspecified amounts, about which no agreement is made. It is a valuable gift, but not one with a scale of value, and really acts like any other gift, except when used to cover some specific expediency, such as a visiting relative's bus fare.

Money, then, is polysemous in Mabumba, and has not yet become exclusively identified with its meaning in Western capitalism. What must be realised is that such multiplicity of meaning is to do with the continued importance of kinship in the forces <sup>and relations</sup> of production; money is much more freely usable where non-kin are concerned. It is also to do with particular contexts of power. In maize production it is connected with a set of values and expectations coming from buteko (government) outside the village.

There is an interesting parallel to this in the realm of legal disputation. Small disputes which cannot be settled between the parties (who if kin could not demand monetary compensation, for the same reasons they could not demand money for labour) are, by

tradition, adjudicated by village or section elders (bakalamba), but such people can only suggest settlements in kind, not money (some crops for an alleged theft from a field or granary, for example). If elders cannot settle the case it will pass to the chief's court, which has greater authority but tends not to demand monetary settlements. Ultimately the local court<sup>40</sup> might be approached, which specifically recommends fines. As with maize, then, there is an association between a particular sense of money and the discourse of external, formal institutions (it is interesting, in this connection, that alleged cases of theft of cash maize get referred straight to the local court).

In concluding this chapter I want to reexamine the notion of productive individualism, as there seem grounds to argue that it has a peculiar meaning in relation to maize: whilst other crops are produced (largely) individualistically, it is an individualism which has different connotations. And this particular individualism has implications for the overall economy of Mabumba and men's and women's relative statuses in particular.

Entry into maize production depends ultimately on material circumstances: chiefly, the means to gain labour beyond that which is taken up with subsistence production (one's own resources, resources obtainable from kin, or from institutional loans). There are few persons now in Mabumba who would profess an aversion to maize farming: most on the outside claim that they do not have the means to start, and that the community of producers and associated

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Such courts are part of the nationally administered legal system which is based on English law.

government staff ignore them<sup>41</sup>. Those with distinctly no interest in the crop (in the sense of producing it themselves) are older women at the foci of matrilineages who according to Ushi matrilineal ulutambi may expect the maximum degree of respect and services from kin. In all likelihood they will be benefitting from some junior kin's maize farming through the distributive use of resources.

The sort of individualism peculiar to maize farming is not explained just by its logical requirements as a capitalist enterprise. The mechanism through which knowledge of maize production is transmitted is equally important. Education about maize is an explicit process, quite distinct from the general learning and socialisation which children experience, and always have experienced, in the village. Indeed, where children are taught farming in primary school, it is maize farming: and adults see their own learning as analagous with institutional education, a means to becoming the sorts of people that state rhetoric encourages (as I argue in detail in chapter 6 on extension). To have become a maize farmer is in a sense to have passed a test, to have undergone a trial (people who go for training courses receive certificates, which are often to be seen proudly displayed in their houses). The control over the knowledge so imparted seems more to do with wanting to maintain a certain sense of privilege, of mystification, over maize farming, than any fears of sorcery accusation, as might apply in other areas of agriculture. In a sense, to have become a maize farmer is to have entered the circle of power which came first with the white man and now resides with the urban educated; a power which may be premised on different

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<sup>41</sup> But see also chapter 10 on the issue of avoiding state surveillance.

understandings of how the human and physical environment work, but understandings which villagers recognise as efficacious<sup>42</sup>. To be a maize farmer is to be a significantly different kind of person. It is thus not surprising that maize production techniques are not construed as something to be freely passed around the community (see chapters on extension).

Privilege is maintained by restricting access to knowledge. Since procedural correctness is so important, anyone employed by a maize farmer will be taught explicitly (most usually his wife and children). When non-household, non-kin labour is desired, piece workers are selected carefully according to some criterion of connection (shared membership of a church congregation being common, see chapter 8). Information is not volunteered willy-nilly to the community at large, except in some institutionally defined public settings as when hosting field days as demonstration farmers (being selected for such events, as an "exemplary farmer", attracts considerable kudos). Before the arrival of extension and maize, such public attention was not available to village "commoners".

There are plenty of people who start maize farming on a trial-and-error basis, but members of the "elect" who have been through the training procedures are quick to find fault with them, regardless of the results they achieve (given the technical requirements of maize, they often do fail). This adds to the tendency of non-maize farmers to see the enterprise as beyond their capabilities, and more generally for it to be treated as a given package defined by some

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The relations of different understandings of the environment is explored in detail in chapter 9 on the chief and Makumba.

exterior wisdom; not subject to the kinds of experimentation that happen for other crops.

So, there is a sort of community of maize farmers, but one which is productive of a certain individualism which is nuclear family based and male oriented. Though people may employ and instruct close matrikin in maize production, it is common for a maize farmer to say of some relative "I don't need to help him at all because he is already a (maize) farmer.", and for the sentiment to be reciprocated<sup>43</sup>. To be a maize farmer is, then, thought of in terms of a certain sort of self-sufficiency which was not part of the kin-based polity. Whilst it is true that it has always been desirable for any adult to be able to meet his or her own subsistence needs, the individualism of maize is about monetary self-sufficiency, and though for most people maize farming remains only one of their productive activities in Mabumba<sup>44</sup>, there are those who are beginning to see it as an economic panacea. Some younger men did not seem alarmed that their household food production had suffered since they had started maize farming: after all, once they expanded production to a certain level, they would be earning enough money to buy any

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<sup>43</sup> This comment is most often made between households which are all fairly early in the household development cycle (from first children to middle age). It does not deny the expectation that in later life one might demand services from junior kin one has assisted to enter maize production. Whether or not such expectations will remain realisable is an interesting question, given maize farming's short history in Mabumba.

<sup>44</sup> It must be stressed that individuals are simultaneously partaking in the different forms of production described in this chapter, using money and other rewards for labour in their distinctive senses. I am not trying to suggest a dualistic economy in which there are maize farmers and everyone else, clearly (practically and conceptually) dichotomised.



food they could not produce themselves, from other villagers who were concentrating on subsistence crops (and substituting bought mealie meal for cassava flour, the "superior" food of townspeople).

I have alluded to women's disadvantageous position in relation to cash maize production. Relative to men, it is both more difficult to gain access to the enterprise, and potentially disruptive of other areas of agricultural production. Structurally, women's autonomous adoption of cash maize is made problematic by the fact that women's labour is less easy to commoditise than is men's (cf. Crehan, 1987, p. 187). Arguably, women's agricultural tasks are quite sustained, and not susceptible to easy quantification. So women cannot hire other women to replace their own labour on food crops. Those women who do employ other women in agriculture usually do so on the basis of reciprocating groups where there is no discrete payment. For example, it is common when a woman cannot keep up the supply of cassava flour to the house fast enough, or wants a bulk quantity to take for sale at lake Bangweulu, that she will gather a group of female friends and kin on her fields to harvest and process the tubers, in exchange for which the other participants take a share of the product. But this was the only area of food crop production where I found women employing other women<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> Though it seems a task such as weeding a cassava field would be very difficult to quantify, evidence in chapters 5 and 6 suggests that the idea of quantification, as found in maize production, is beginning to spread into some areas of food crop production (though more so for men than for women). The structural problem for the commoditisation of women's labour cannot therefore be treated as an immovable obstacle, at least not in tasks of agricultural production. Another, more pragmatic problem, is that women who might be candidates for labour (the young unmarried) are themselves now more interested in working for cash or commodities in maize fields.

In the conjugal setting, the structural problem is counfounded with questions of household authority. Men have the greater degree of authority over decision making within marriage, and succeed in getting their wives to participate in their enterprises: whilst men are performing operations in maize usually associated with women (especially harvesting), there is not compensatory effort by men in their wives' food crop fields (with exceptions, such as a Jehovah's Witness described in chapter 8).

Maize production has the potential to reduce women's productive autonomy and levels of village food production. This important issue has been focused on elsewhere in Zambia (e.g. Sharpe, 1987, in Northern Province). It would be difficult as yet to draw any strong conclusions for Mabumba, as the imprint of cash maize has been so recent. What limited evidence there is supports the general thesis: work by ARPT<sup>46</sup> has indicated that high incidence of "pops" (empty pods) in groundnuts, and consequent low yields, are related to late planting by women whose time has been diverted into planting and weeding maize. But what the deleterious consequences might be of such changes, and whom they will affect, remain subjects for further research.

One question which this discussion of individualism relating to maize might raise is what consequences is maize cash cropping having for class formation in Mabumba? This issue will be explored in the concluding chapter in relation to questioning how a discourse style of analysis complements a more traditional materialist one. My next

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<sup>46</sup> See Gatter and Sikana, 1989.

task, though, is to move the focus from production to consumption; more precisely, to explore the complex relations between production and distribution in Mabumba. I shall argue, in the next chapter, that the totality of productive aims is as much to do with maintaining and increasing channels of access to resources as it is about the enhancement of the productive processes themselves.

## Chapter 5: The social organisation of distribution.

This chapter forms the second half of an attempt to answer the question "Why do people produce what they produce?" The focus so far has been the productive processes themselves. Now we must look at distribution, and the connections between production and distribution.

In later chapters on extension I show how at a conceptual level maize is beginning to affect how some people understand themselves as producers, taking on new sorts of identity quite different to "subsistence farmers". But, at a practical level, there is no contradiction in the introduction of maize as a new activity, as far as production is concerned. Though the institutions may previously have fostered some idea of productive communalism, the attempt has now largely been abandoned<sup>1</sup>, and although they may imagine they are serving the farm family, their actual relations are with individuals for the purpose of allocating loans and buying products. Productive individualism is common to institutional and village approaches (though individualism with different senses, as we saw in the last chapter). Where contradiction arises is between the multiplicity of channels an individual may choose to enter his or her resources into; set against the unilinear use expected in maize production. This chapter presents the forms of distribution which exist in Mabumba, their relations, and the senses in which the maize enterprise is more restrictive than previously existing forms of production (where distribution is concerned). It furthers my argument that the

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter 8.

complexities of these arrangements may be better grasped from a discourse perspective than from a materialist one dealing in such distinctions as production for use versus production for exchange, and is suggestive of problems in earlier analyses of the relations between matriliney and the capitalist economy.

Discourse analysis carries with it the danger of stasis, of one empowering discourse (productionism) seeming to kill another (distributionism), so that the presentation is of a set of bounded historical epochs whose transitions are not adequately explained (rather treated as quantum leaps; this has been a criticism of Foucault's interpretation of historical sources). The labels productionism and distributionism should not be taken too literally, as both perspectives address production and distribution, albeit in rather different ways. I shall demonstrate that distributional strategies can be adaptive for achieving production aims, so that distributionism and productionism are in dynamic relation with one another, presenting contradictions which are not yet resolved. Specifically, while describing the various forms of distribution in Mabumba, I shall suggest that people use distributional opportunities strategically as a means to bolster production, with cash income as an important motivation. The principles of distribution among matrikin remain strong, but with a focus which always returns to production.

#### Forms of distribution

The starting point for distribution is an individual holding a resource which he or she may dispose of at will. There is no sense in which products are commonly owned by virtue of the production

process; however, the land (icalo) belongs to the Ushi people as a whole as does its products, and one must exchange goods as an aspect of kinship. In agriculture, rights in the product are defined by usership of the field. So, if a husband and wife have separate imiunda, then each will have their own ubutala at the house for finger millet, and will dispose of the content autonomously. When relatives visit a household, whether of husband's or wife's matriline, it is usual for the wife to decide which food to prepare for them, since food products come mainly from her fields. When visiting a household once, the wife was shelling groundnuts. She said she would like to offer me some, but couldn't as the owner (her son), was not there.

The owner of a resource may use it in four different ways. A food crop is an example where all four uses might apply. First, it would be consumed to satisfy the needs of the individual and dependents who have automatic claims to it (husband and children in the case of a married woman). The remainder may be distributed in one of three ways. First, it may be given away. Secondly, it may be sold on the informal market; and thirdly it may be sold to the state. These three types of use are effectively separate spheres of exchange, and, importantly, are not merely alternatives: which form of distribution is chosen will depend on the context of which particular resource is involved, and which people are party to the event.

I have already covered the giving and demanding of food gifts as a constituent of kin relations in chapter 3. Whilst such behaviour continues to be important, in the sense of daily support through regular small gifts, the actual proportion of food grown entered into

such exchanges is quite small (c.f. Sharpe, p.53); basic subsistence needs are supposed to be met within the household, and this indeed has been the case immemorially. Only when someone is temporarily incapable of feeding themselves can they draw heavily on kin support: regular, small exchanges are more about maintaining social connection than dependence for physiological existence<sup>2</sup>.

Oral history collected in Mabumba suggests that increased involvement in the cash economy has drawn some distributive use of resources progressively toward the informal and formal markets. Rather than give resources as gifts, people are seeking to use them more to gain labour to expand production, or to sell them directly. Payson, an older member of the chief's village, described how it used to be the case that food was used in quite large quantities for entertainment. There used to be a large nsaka in each village where the men would gather, and women from several households would cook food there for them (c.f. Richards, 1939, p. 122). Then, at funerals, all attenders were supposed to bring gifts of food for the ulupwa of the deceased. Now only the closest relatives do so. Other people would donate a few ngwee or kwacha.

Payson located the change in people increasingly needing cash. For himself, if he now managed to grow three bags of groundnuts in a year, he would sell one, save one for seed, and consume the rest within his household (though some of the latter would end up being given as entertainment to visitors). Formerly, he (or rather his

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<sup>2</sup> Crehan found likewise among the Kaonde that any individual who does not produce, unless debarred by complete physical disablement, will be treated badly by the rest of the village (1987, pp. 64-65).

wife) would have been inclined to set more aside as gifts. Andrea<sup>3</sup> grew two bags in 1988, selling one, and dividing the other between seed and household consumption. As a rather different example, Feline (see below), as a single woman, offered a share in the product to gain the labour so she could at least produce some groundnuts for herself and her children. She might sell a few at the village market if she felt she could spare some and needed the cash<sup>4</sup>. Though rather different, all these actors were using resources to assure future production (Payson and Andrea both used some of the money raised to pay for piece work labour).

#### Distribution in the production process.

Could has suggested that "much strategic practice is keyed to the distribution, and not the production of resources" and that "productive strategies are strongly influenced by the need to generate resources which can be fed into the matrices of reciprocal entitlements", so that they (productive strategies) "are residual to strategic manoeuvres aimed at ensuring potential entitlements." (1987, p. 12).

Whilst this broadly follows the distinction I am portraying between productionism and distributionism, it tends to miss the fact that distributive strategies may themselves be a means to fulfilling production desires; i.e. the relation between production and distribution is one of resonance, not that distribution and

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<sup>3</sup> See also chapter 8. Household head, house 17, Appendix 2. G and H.

<sup>4</sup> Groundnuts command a relatively high unit price on local markets (K1-2 per small plate in 1987-88) and can be sold for more if roasted and salted as a snack.



production should be treated as separate foci. For example, Sarah<sup>5</sup> had arrived back in Chipanta after many years in her husband's area in the north of Mansa district. She rented a small house from someone who had left the village but wanted to build a larger one for herself and two daughters. One of her relatives in Chipanta was Feline<sup>6</sup>, also single with children ("Feline e mwana wandi"; a classificatory daughter). Sarah had brought a large stock of finger millet from the heavily wooded area she had left. Feline was renowned in the village for her beer, yet she was progressively growing less finger millet and brewing less beer because of the distance to citemene fields. The two of them came to an arrangement whereby Sarah gave millet to Feline, some of which the latter used to brew katubi, for use in rewarding a party of men to make bricks for Sarah's new house. At the party the men gave thanks both to Sarah for providing the good millet, and Feline for brewing good beer.

These events must be properly contextualised. Sarah could, like most women, brew for herself. Yet, because of her absence from the area (Kalasa was her home village) she had lost contact with many of her matrikin. Giving the millet to Feline was part of a process of reestablishing relations. Many in the village would eagerly participate in work for Feline's beer, whereas Sarah felt she was still an unknown quantity. Thus, Sarah was able to use her millet distributively to attract labour for a piece of production, simultaneously edging her way into networks of reciprocation with her fellow ulupwa and mukowa members. Feline gained enough finger millet

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 2. G and 2. H: household head in house 31.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 2. G and 2. H: Household head in house 37.

for several beer parties, guaranteeing access to male labour for her citemene fields which she might otherwise not have.

Other examples will follow, especially in connection with marketing, to show the variety of distributional channels employed in Mabumba, and how these feed back into production through gaining access to labour. To use Gould's terminology, the distributional strategies in Mabumba seem as much about securing entitlements to labour (to maintain or increase production) as access to products which others already hold.

This has been the response to an increasingly monetised economy: not that matrilineal principles have necessarily been denied by accumulative capitalist tendencies; rather that they have been modified where expansion of production is felt as an imperative. Kin now realise productive opportunities for one another in the sphere of cash-oriented activities<sup>7</sup>. The strategy remains a distributionist one: whilst the aim may be to increase production, this is not through generation and reinvestment of surplus value.

#### Informal marketing in Mabumba.

The main arena for the realignment of distributionism within a market economy has been the burgeoning of informal<sup>8</sup> markets in and around Mabumba. Most significant to this process has been the metalling of

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<sup>7</sup> Anecdotal evidence suggests that the circle of kin served in this way is smaller than was the case for matrilineal distribution in the past, but I am not in a position to quantify the process or historicise it properly.

<sup>8</sup> Under the heading of informal I include all marketing in which the state does not intervene.

the main Mansa-Samfya road (with a spur across the Bangweulu marshes to join the main Lusaka-Mpika highway), completed in 1986. During its construction there was a Chinese road camp in the chief's village, which provided a ready market for any food surplus to the villagers' subsistence requirements; this later became the site for the Basic Secondary School, which has continued to provide custom for local products. Perhaps more importantly, the road has given all-season access to the fishermen of lake Bangweulu, who have traded fish for staple crops with the Ushi immemorially, but with physical restrictions to the volume of trade which have now been eased. More generally, the amount of traffic using the road has increased, and it is noticeable in villages such as Kasanga that most new houses are being built near the roadside where bananas, tomatoes, water melons and so forth can be displayed for sale to travellers.

During the colonial period, women began taking some groundnuts and finger millet for sale at the growing market in Fort Rosebery. At the time, people ate or exchanged most of their food in the village, according to Kunda, one of the sibling group born of the founders of Chipanta. By the 1930s, there was considerable demand in the township for cassava meal from people who could no longer produce it for themselves (it should be remembered that Luapula remains a cassava staple province, and fifty years ago maize was not grown except as a minor vegetable crop).

At first the women went carrying bags of cassava flour on their heads to the Boma. Later, white women came out to buy meal for their domestic servants and other workers. Then (1940s and 1950s) white men came by lorry with weighing scales, and purchased it in bulk. It

appears this trade declined toward independence, with the establishment in Mansa of the general urban pattern of maize mealie meal consumption, and government priority since independence has been to support the production and marketing of maize<sup>9</sup>.

In parallel with these marketing developments, various local people set up businesses, such as shops and tea rooms. Chanda and Yambayamba record there was a store in Kwilwa (near Mpemba) before independence owned by Moses and Dick (1974, case 21), and several stores in the chief's village. Chibwe Chungwe set up shop there as long ago as 1944, and sold clothes, sugar, salt, sweets and biscuits. The general import of Chanda and Yambayamba's data is that African owned businesses proliferated in the immediate post-independence era, then began to decline in the 1970s with a faltering national economy and political pressures on individuals: "Nowadays (1974), if you want to have a successful business you have to buy some beer for the officers at the rural council, or give your sisters to one of them, etc.." (op. cit. case 33, p.10). There was one store remaining in Mabumba in 1974; none at all during my field work, except for headman Chipanta acting as a retail outlet for mealie meal. In some cases this was a matter of going out of business: in others of moving to more lucrative sites. So, Mr Wangolone had moved to Mansa around 1972, since he would have more customers there than in Chisongo. Three years later, though, he established a large cattle farm near Mpemba, and appointed his sister (nkashi) to supervise it, sending her some money from his successful town store and one cow each year

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<sup>9</sup> Even by 1987 Luapula was still a deficit maize producer, needing to import one quarter of consumption (Dahlin, pers. comm.).

to dispose of as she chose. Lack of retailing in Mabumba has to be seen in the context of more widespread kin links; the apparent decline is not as stark as it might seem from treating the chiefdom as a geographical isolate.

Thus, relative economic quietude settled on Mabumba for about ten years from 1975. A range of new opportunities has arisen since then, which must be seen in terms of the establishment of the new road and the range of government initiatives which have been focused on the chief's village. The year 1988 saw the start of building for the first retail shop and wayside "restaurant" in Mabumba since fifteen years previously, an indicator of the rapid economic expansion over the past five years<sup>10</sup>.

#### The use of cassava.

Comparative studies of marketing elsewhere in Mansa District have shown increasing sales of high value food crops (especially groundnuts and beans) to passing middlemen (banakungula). This has been particularly noticeable in chief Milambo's, which services the markets of the Copperbelt towns on the other side of the Zaire pedicle (Gould, pers. comm.). Mabumba has received less attention from town traders, and indeed the chief strongly proscribes sale of all but a small proportion of such crops, encouraging people rather to enter maize production to earn money. While small quantities of all food crops are sold in and around Mabumba, the largest informal market has always been the supply of staple food to those groups

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<sup>10</sup> It must be borne in mind that my analysis of changing economic behaviours (in this and other chapters) refers to a recent and very active period of change.

unable to produce for themselves; the townspeople (until the encroachment of maize), and the fishermen of the Bangweulu swamps. In an area where non-vegetable protein is quite scarce, there is always high local demand for both fresh and dried fish, and the opening of the metalled road has brought a substantially increased movement of cassava from Mabumba to the lake, occasioned in part by the devastating effects of the cassava mealy bug on crops in Samfya district near the lake (most acute from 1984-86). In what follows, it should be borne in mind that the current perception by state institutions is that the economic potential of cassava has yet to be recognised by villagers.

The way that cassava is used is complicated, and circumstantially variable. It is illustrative of a distributionist attitude to the use of resources more generally. Most importantly, it is synonymous for the Ushi with food. As Audrey Richards recorded for the Bemba (1939, p. 47) people do not consider that they have eaten unless satiated with bwali (whichever local crop this is made from). If one can meaningfully talk of ranking crops by priority (see below), then cassava still comes first for everyone in Mabumba. All women must grow it, and men contribute to its growth through provision of labour for land preparation (either by themselves or through recruiting piece workers). Unlike the snack food crops, it is not given away to relatives, but is nevertheless central to kin relations since the main way of offering hospitality is through food prepared as a meal of bwali and munani (relish). By far the majority of cassava produced in Mabumba gets consumed within households, exchange occurring through mutual visits to share food. The rest is subject to strategic distributional use.

The first point to be made is that the distribution of cassava is entirely the province of women<sup>11</sup>. Production (i.e. usership of the field) defines ownership to the point of distribution, so that most food crops are women's to deploy. People speak of my field and my crop (e.g. ibala lyandi; tute wandi). Most women sell or exchange some cassava from time to time. Either dried tubers or flour are sold in Tuta and Chinsanka near the Bangweulu swamps, in Mansa and on trips to the Copperbelt. The possibility of selling locally has also opened up, now that Mabumba is attracting stranger settlers as a relatively attractive area for maize farming<sup>12</sup>: though all settlers will grow the crop, it must be remembered cassava is perennial, and tubers cannot usually be harvested during the first eighteen months of growth.

Women distribute their cassava through a tiered system. For the most part, what is sold or exchanged is not a planned surplus; merely that which is above requirements at any particular time. Most of my informants were keen to make trips to the fishermen, since they knew the price of a plateful of flour there would be two-and-a-half to three times that securable locally. Typically, one woman might be able to take two basket loads (about 40kg) of flour to the lake at a time, which would raise between K200 and K300; Agness made about

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<sup>11</sup> I came across an exceptional case of a man selling cassava. He was a Lima farmer, and had sold the crop on an experimental basis to the Luapula Cooperative Union.

<sup>12</sup> Attractive in infrastructural terms, if not agroecologically a very good area for the crop. It is important here that sale of cassava is to strangers; it would be thought inappropriate to try to sell it to kin (see previous chapter).

five such trips per year, so gained in the region of K1,000<sup>13</sup>. However, it was difficult to make an accurate estimate of takings because some of the flour would always be used to barter for fish instead. Fresh lake fish are a highly desired relish in Mabumba, so those returning with it are both able to offer their own dependents and other relatives prestigious meals, and raise good cash on them by selling on locally (a bunch of five small tilapia bream was selling for about K6 in Mabumba in 1988). Alternatively, it can provide an attractive reward for agricultural labour, as in the example in chapter 2 where it was used to pay a group of women for finger millet harvesting. Importantly, it is rare to find a woman selling or exchanging only her own cassava. The rationale most often heard is

"Tute ni cakulya cesu; tatushitishafye cinkupiti wa tute pantu tutina kufwa ku nsala."

*"Cassava is our food; we don't sell a large quantity of cassava because we fear starvation."*

What happens instead is that someone will set aside a little of the flour prepared from one harvesting, and supplement it with some bought from other women in the surrounding villages (Chisongo and Yasakwa were noted as places where people had relatively much cassava to sell). Though in our terms the final profit margin will be less by doing this, the women in Mabumba consider security of their own food supplies first. And although crops in Mabumba have been less affected than elsewhere, concerns over food security have deepened with the deprivations of cassava mealy bug<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Given the maize producer price of K92 per 90kg, such incomes compare favourably with what might be gained from a small lima farm.

<sup>14</sup> See chapter 9.



There are also a few women who set aside whole fields of cassava for sale, and thereby provide a notable proportion of the excess which other women buy and sell on at the lake. The system works by parcelling off a field into lots worth between K20 and K200, and allowing the purchasers to harvest the tubers for themselves. Decisions to sell in this way are reviewed yearly. Occasionally someone may part with a whole field out of desperation for cash, but usually those who sell have relatively much land under cassava through access to resources to gain the requisite extra-household labour. Thus, in Kasanga there were four such women. The one having the largest field for sale was the senior wife of the headman, Julieta. She was able to sell a whole field every year. She and her husband remained some of the largest finger millet growers in the village, and she brewed enough beer to open a large munda every year. As focal members of the major matrilineages in the village, they were always able to call together labour parties, and Julieta was noted as a good brewer.

She made the point to me that she always had at least one large cassava field in citemene. It was the citemene field that was sold, since less extra labour was needed there than on digging gardens (making it cheaper<sup>15</sup>) and with the imiunda increasingly distant, it was as well to leave the laborious business of carrying the tubers back to the village to the purchasers.

The price gained in this way would be much lower than by selling at

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<sup>15</sup> And people are still happy to work for beer in citemene, whereas increasingly those who work on permanent fields want money (see previous chapter).

the lake, but all the labour of harvesting and processing is saved. For Julieta it was a strategically important activity. With the expansion of cassava marketing to the lake, she always had a queue of women wanting to buy from her. Allowing someone to buy usually brought forth small gifts, such as some fish from the lake, as well as the cash from the immediate transaction. Such gifts would put people in favour with Julieta for future allocations of cassava.

Julieta said she also sold some cassava at the lake, and this was only wise, since if she had more than required at the house in the older fields it was as well to sell on or the tubers would eventually rot in the ground. She had no plans to expand the selling of whole fields since she was near her limit for recruiting labour with beer, and would not want to divert scarce cash to gain extra labour.

In relation to these ways of organising cassava use in the villages, it is interesting to see what the state was attempting to do. In line with a general policy directive to diversify research, extension and support away from maize, it became an aim in Luapula in the 1980s to expand cassava production. Ideas were even being mooted at provincial level of trying to industrialise processing (to make tapioca and starch for biscuits) so as to create much higher urban demand. Little of this had happened, except that a state producer price had been offered by LCU since the middle of the decade. At first this was very poor, and early attempts to encourage sale by villagers were firmly rebuffed. In 1987-88, though, the unit price offered exceeded that for maize. Still, few of my informants were interested. There would be no bags from LCU if the position with maize was anything to go by, and then they felt they would be

expected to sell at least 90kg at a time, which most women considered too large an amount to risk selling at once; or, for that matter, to prepare at one time. Careful distribution for small but regular cash sums or supplies of fish were what counted.

State perceptions of why villagers were not interested in selling cassava to them followed a rather different rationale<sup>16</sup>. First, they thought there was poor market intelligence in the villages, and tackled this by sending cooperative staff out to give seminars on marketing to villagers. Whilst it is true that none of the villagers in Mabumba were aware of the new 1987-88 price, they did know of state interest, and a few had sold some to LCU in the past, though these were male maize growers who looked on selling to LCU as a business opportunity. They gave up because of the poor prices.

Secondly, and more importantly, the problems for expanding production and sale to the state were seen by institution staff as due to the nature of the cassava itself. The cooperatives development officer at LCU felt there was no encouragement to increase productivity because there were no new high yielding varieties on offer through research and extension. The new, superior sorts of maize had proved remarkably successful, and (if yield is assumed the main indicator of success) indeed considerably outyielded local maize (mataba caushi; mataba yemiunda). His focus was on the productive performance of the crop; through being traditional (i.e. not improved by scientists) local cassava must necessarily be inferior. This has to be set

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<sup>16</sup> In relation to this point I argue further in chapter 7 how crops whose production is difficult to quantify pose special problems for intervention by government services.

against the village focus which, as I am showing, revolves much more around creating and maintaining channels of access to labour to support or expand production, rather than aiming at maximising output per unit area (where biological performance of the crop takes on immediate significance).

To cite another chain of resource use, the vegetables which are now grown on the dambos are often sold in Mansa, or locally from the house or to the Basic Secondary School. Receipts may be used in a number of ways. If a trip has been made to town, then a considerable proportion of the income may be spent on household commodities, such as sugar, salt, soap, paraffin and cooking oil. All of these may be sold on at a profit in Mabumba, by division into small quantities which people may buy as and when they have spare cash, and some of this cash would inevitably be used to recruit labour. There again, the commodities themselves (especially salt) are often used directly to reward labour. Alternatively, some may be set aside as gifts for relatives<sup>17</sup>. But, I was told, the giving of commodities to relatives was purposive; everyone was short of cash to buy them, so a commodity gift was generally of some importance and might strategically be given in expectation, say, of receiving a chicken in return, which might be needed to entertain an important visitor.

To make the point more clearly, I am arguing that a distributionist use of resources is one where multiplicity is the overriding factor: so, these channels to labour may involve reciprocation, or monetary payment, and a whole range of intervening stages. To see money as

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<sup>17</sup> As outlined in chapter 4 for labour, the same applies here; one could not appropriately sell commodities to close kin.

essentially a different, new, capitalist phenomenon is to miss the point, discussed in chapter 4, that it is polysemous in Mabumba, depending on which channels it enters. It can be used according to either distributionist or productionist rationales, and contradictions are beginning to arise significantly only in relation to cash maize farming. The fact that kin do not enter monetary relations with one another is not a problem as Mabumba is an area with a considerable influx of strangers, so there are always local buyers, as well as customers in town and by the lake.

#### Household budgetting

Another way of considering how people distribute resources in Mabumba is to think about household budgetting; i.e. how resource use is organised over time. This is a notoriously difficult area for research, as people tend to be sensitive about how many goods they have and how they use them, but discussions with informants brought out an important principle which makes sense in terms of a distributionist attitude in a straitened economy, which is very different from the way institutions understand "budgetting".

When I asked specifically how he prioritised the use of money, Mackson responded in such a way as to suggest it was not a meaningful question. Money was in short supply, so as soon as he received some, he would decide to use it according to what need seemed most pressing at the time. He could only plan the use of money ahead if he had much more of it. Like other sources of economic value, it was good to be able to use it in many different small ways (panono panono). In direct contrast to the way he might choose to use money, he disliked loans given for maize growing because he felt "handcuffed"

(he used the English word); trapped into using the money in one large lump for a single purpose.

On a longer time scale, people in Mabumba often exhibit what to institutions seem extraordinary changes of direction in economic behaviour. John<sup>18</sup>, soon to be headman of Langi, had taken up maize farming in the early 1980s. In 1987 he dropped the enterprise altogether, and went off to act as a fish trader between the lake and Mabumba, and was absent for the planting season. He planned thereafter to go back to maize farming as he hadn't made ~~as much~~ money from fishing as he expected. Sporadically, he continued also to be away for extended periods hunting (see Appendix 1).

In his absence, his wife, Soma, and children were able to fall back on support from matrikin. They didn't plant any new crops, but there was enough cassava in the ground to sustain them, and Soma received groundnuts and other relish ingredients from her mother, whilst assisting her with weeding and harvesting of her food crop fields.

John's younger brother Dason<sup>19</sup> had also given up maize farming in the same year, but because he had received his seed late and the rains were poor. He sold his credit inputs and devoted his time to making and selling saucepans and hoe blades (undercutting the town prices of

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<sup>18</sup> See Appendix 2. G and 2. H: household head in house 18.

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix 2. G and 2. H: household head in house 15.

these manufactures)<sup>20</sup>. Again, food production was supplemented by mothers, in this case in both matrilineal as husband and wife were from the same village.

Both men understood their activities as expanding their economic possibilities in a sensible way, given that their basic subsistence needs would still be met, and that their income opportunities might be more widely spread through the year compared with maize farming. They also specialised in digging wells together during the dry season. Such a variety of activities served the purpose of status as well as economic enhancement, and John's ambidexterity doubtless contributed toward his selection as headman of Langi. In stark contrast, I would often hear such behaviour denigrated by institution staff as dilettante and going against the year-to-year consolidation of the benefits of maize farming.

#### Conflict in resource use.

It is in the use of the inputs for maize production that conflict begins to arise between distributionism and productionism. The selling on of seed and fertiliser are quite common, and go entirely against the precepts which the institutions are trying to instil in their subjects. To take an example, where people do this, it is common to find them selling on at below cost price. Apart from institutions being irritated by such behaviour as it is "wasteful" of resources, it also appears irrational to them because there is no profit motive operating. Those who sell may or may not have set out with this motive initially. It can be that some circumstance has

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See Appendix 1. for technical details of village artisanal work.

intervened to prevent timely planting; or that cash is needed urgently to buy, for example, a blanket in anticipation of the cold season. Under these circumstances it may make sense to sell the inputs for whatever cash sum can be obtained (since they are relatively expensive, other villagers are unwilling to buy at cost price) knowing that the manifold channels which can be activated to gain resources might still allow the paying off of the loan at season's end. Villagers are aware, though, that the loaning institutions take a narrower view. One young man in Mabumba received thirty-two bags of fertiliser on credit in 1987, and sold all but two of them. He feared the extension staff might come to see what he had planted, but decided to take the risk anyway as he had got away with similar practices in the past<sup>21</sup>.

Selling of inputs to provide short-term cash needs is only one of the distributional uses of the maize enterprise I found in Mabumba, and these uses are becoming ever more convoluted to avoid the restrictive inspection of the state. Now that extension staff try to inspect how people use inputs (chapter 6) and input loans are deducted from maize sales, it is difficult for people to continue to receive loans unless they are able to produce some maize at the cooperative depot at the end of the year. Either enough inputs are retained by the applicant to grow sufficient maize to cover costs, or some more ingenious scheme is devised.

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<sup>21</sup> If someone fails to produce enough maize to cover input credit, no action is taken against them if they can make up the deficit with cash (LCU exists chiefly to try to make a profit); the difficulty has come because extension staff have been trained to be more vigilant, and after a two year interregnum in Mabumba, a relatively keen agricultural assistant arrived in 1987 (see chapter 6).



A woman in Mponda failed to be selected as a Lima farmer, but found an alternative way to start. She had a male matrilineal relative in Monga, much closer to the main road, who secured a loan for her on condition he might keep some of the proceeds from the crop. As far as the extension staff were concerned, the man was the grower (and since he was trusted as a progressive farmer, they did not bother to inspect his fields). The person who alerted me to the case told me this was the only other person in Mponda growing maize; a man who had been trained as a Lima farmer, who complained of the "disorderly" methods of the woman (Alimafye mataba pambilibili; she is just cultivating maize any old how).

Sale is not the only possibility; both inputs and the end product may be used in forms of material support between relatives. For example, in the "household" described in chapter 3, consisting of Sebastiano Chipanta and his younger brother and sister, all three siblings have their own maize farms. However, in return for feeding them, both Sebastiano and Langson provide Vera with some labour for cultivation. In 1986 Sebastiano was the only one of the three to get an input loan, so he gave one quarter share each to his brother and sister. Both he and Langson each give one bag of their harvested maize to her each year as well<sup>22</sup>, knowing that Vera had privileged access to the local hammer mill through supplying the owner with sikana wine.

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This is quite a rare event. Maize is not the staple food of the Ushi, and they do not possess village level technology for pounding it into flour. Furthermore, the grain type of the maize hybrids is notoriously difficult to pound by hand. There are a couple of privately owned hammer mills in Mabumba chiefdom, but these are frequently out of action. It is also economically more attractive to sell maize grain and buy state milled meal because of a heavy subsidy on the latter. Overall, there is little incentive to retain hybrid maize for home use or presentation as gifts.

Bruno was achieving yields of about nine bags per lima (fairly typical for Mabumba). Given the producer price of K78 per 90kg bag in 1987, after giving away half his inputs he was still able to grow enough maize himself to cover the total loan (K631 that year; whilst income from his 2 lima was K1404).

All these uses of maize and its inputs serve a purpose in securing or maintaining access to other resources. But the idea of distributing inputs is inimical to productionist thinking. It disrupts the unilinear process from input to output, and monetary calculation of performance. Sebastiano is an example of successful appropriation of productionist resources to distributionist ends. Those who fail, though, will be increasingly subject to state retribution; already, the new extension officer is listing people who have used their inputs incorrectly, so that they may be debarred from receiving loans in future, and people notice on visits to Mansa the prominent display of posters showing loan defaulters behind bars. Importantly, this is a processual restriction, designed to encourage (enforce?) the use of resources in a single chain. In one sense, villagers and state seem to be playing out a strategic game in which one side is trying always to outmanoeuvre the other.

But this process I have considered so far over short time frames; no more than one agricultural season at a time. I have evidence also which suggests that the maize enterprise is having effects on longer-term patterns of resource use, particularly the use of land.

#### Land and its changing meanings.

In any analysis of changes in political economy, land figures as a

factor of production, and common to most analyses is the overarching principle that capitalisation of the mode of production carries with it the commoditisation of land; land becoming (logically and practically) a scarce resource. In what senses this process might be occurring in Mabumba is an important question. In chapter 2 I discussed briefly the principles guiding access to land for the Ushi, and that, broadly speaking, these had not changed in the course of remembered history. However, certain changes are now afoot, which definitely are to do with the increasing emphasis on permanent cropping, especially of maize. I will argue that changing attitudes to land, in what might be considered a jural domain, can be seen as one aspect of the spreading influence of a productionist discourse in agriculture. What follows, then, is a discussion of the administration of land, as opposed to the technical dimension of its use which I related in chapter 2.

#### Boundedness and unboundedness.

In agreement with what Karla Poewe described for the Luapula Valley (1981, p.56), I found that the bush and its resources were believed to be abundant and good, freely to be used by the Ushi people. The term bush (mpanga) was used in reference to uncultivated land and citemene fields; not to mabala, fisebe, or mafarms (maize farms; see chapter 2 for definitions).

"People don't have to fight for bush land; there is plenty for everyone. It is not a problem to grow enough food. Once, long in the past, there was a famine, called NaMumba. That happened because the people annoyed Makumba. Nowadays the people and Makumba do not work together. The foods that are grown in the village; the fruits like mangoes and oranges. They are different. People will fight over them because they can sell them."

In principle the bush remains an unbounded resource, and the

agricultural practices associated with the bush themselves are unbounded: citemene fields are not measured, and are shifted to different parts of the bush as and when required. When the bush fails to meet people's needs (a famine being an extreme example), the "traditional" explanation is in terms of human moral failings causing the displeasure and punitive action of a supernatural agency: Makumba still plays a part in village life in Mabumba, especially as a locus for social control, but this is a subject for chapter 9.

Whatever the status of beliefs about Makumba, it remains true that a notion of scarcity does not pertain to natural resources gathered from the bush or grown in citemene fields. But, such a notion is beginning to gain ground in relation to land used to grow marketable crops; and the attitudes to the products are reflected in attitudes toward the land itself. One must be careful here to be specific. Of course, some crops grown in fitemene are sold on the (informal) market, and might misleadingly be labelled commodities, or commoditised. However, as I have argued, such sales are better seen as part of a complex of distributional uses.

In contrast to bush land continuing to be seen as unbounded, land that is used for growing cash maize is seen as discrete, and one can see a plurality of influences defining and promoting this boundedness. First, for those people requiring state assistance in growing the crop demarcation of land has become a prerequisite to the granting of input loans, a matter considered in detail in the chapters on extension. For it to be possible to measure a piece of land for such purposes there is a need for boundaries to be defined. The pieces of land to be used as maize farms are staked out ahead of

approval of loans, and some sort of post is left at the corners of the area making it clear to all that the land is occupied and for a specific purpose.

The effect of this extension requirement has been, in addition to necessitating explicit boundaries, the consolidation of a grower's efforts in one place. Fitemene notably, and mabala to some degree under one person or household's control used to be fairly small and scattered. Maize farms are required by extension to be organised as single blocks for the approval of loans, partly to make the job of demarcation easier, but also, in line with the rhetorical demands of the state, to expand production through "large" farms.<sup>23</sup>

#### The notion of scarcity

A second influence playing into the requirement to define boundaries has been the spatial disposition of maize farms. The residents of large, permanent villages have tended to use land close to the villages, because using high levels of inorganic fertiliser means that soil abandoned from citemene, or no longer considered good enough for mabala can still be productive for several years.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the "difficulties" perceived in maize production are in

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<sup>23</sup> The term "large" is here intended relatively. The state is now in the business of encouraging what it terms "small-scale farmers", so that those producing only for subsistence should come to have maize farms of the order of a few hectares (i.e. become "peasant farmers").

<sup>24</sup> The reliance on artificial sources of fertility on otherwise worn out soils has become a focus of concern for research organisations such as ARPT, who, on reasonable empirical grounds fear that maize monocropping is not sustainable on most soils in Luapula province, and that some form of agro-ecological disaster is not unlikely if changes in agricultural practice do not broaden away from composite and hybrid maize.

part because it is laborious to carry fertiliser bags very far (and few people have access to wheelbarrows or bicycles), and the harvested crop is very heavy on a unit basis. Unlike, for example, cassava, which can be harvested as required, once ripe it is desirable to harvest maize as soon as possible. Collection dates are specified by the provincial cooperative union (though in practice logistical difficulties often lead to delays), and if left in the field the yield will be progressively eroded by pest attack and collapse of the increasingly brittle stems<sup>25</sup>. As importantly, fears of theft from the field are strong. For these reasons, "farmers" desire as easy access as possible to their maize fields.

By the late 1980s, this intensified use of land near to the villages for maize production, for reasons both of economy of labour and enforced consolidation, is showing signs of bringing about new "jural" sanctions relating to land "ownership". Until now, land has been regarded as collectively owned by the Ushi people, but under the stewardship of the chiefs and headmen. What appears to be happening with maize is that a sense of ownership is developing in respect of land which makes its distribution much more closely circumscribed. This sense is developing both unofficially at village level and through official legislation by the state.

John offered me some comments on what he thought it would be like to be a headman.

"I will have to spend much of my time adjudicating in disputes about land".

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Both in the field and village granaries hybrid maize is notably prone to pest attack, having relatively soft, "dent" grains (compared with the harder, "flint" grains of local maize).

Why should this be so, when such disputes had been uncommon in the past, and the use of land relatively unproblematic? The reply was that it had always been a headman's task to allocate land to strangers and settle any arguments, but these had become increasingly common with the spread of maize production. It was the aim of chief Mabumba that farmers in Mabumba should participate in development (buyantanshi) and have large farms. It was therefore likely that having started a farm on a small scale, by expanding there would come a time when a person's boundaries would overlap with someone else's, and a dispute would arise (I have described in chapter 2 the common practice of starting a maize farm by opening a cisebe field and expanding on it in subsequent years). At the same time, many new people were moving in to Mabumba, because it was an area with good facilities, cooperative depots nearby, and quite close to Mansa. The enlargement of existing farms and the addition of new ones, John said, meant disputes over land boundaries were becoming ever more frequent. He thought it would be important for him to record exactly where people's maize farms were situated, so he would have an accurate reference when dealing in disputes, and would know when strangers came asking for maize land the areas he should avoid allocating in terms of potential for future disputes. He emphasised that it was not important to know where people had their citemene fields, as the likelihood of disputes there was quite small.

Worries over access to land and potential for dispute became apparent in 1988 in a new phenomenon. Unprecedentedly, both newcomers moving in to Mabumba and established villagers began calling on the chief at his court to ask for papers which would specify where and how much land they had exclusive rights in, with reference to maize farms

(though mabala used for other crops were included as these exist in the same areas as maize farms, adjacent to the villages). In response to the increasing tide of such requests, chief Mabumba had to post the following notice:

"Abukupoka amakalata yakukopwa nabo pamo naya mabala kuti baleisa na mapepela takwaba mapepela kuno musumba".

*"People wishing to obtain letters about being lent money (through extension), and also about farms, must come with paper: there is no paper here at the chief's palace."*

These requests for documentary evidence of rights in land have happened spontaneously within the village; albeit people see holding papers as being allied to what the government have done in the past when alienating former Native Trust land<sup>26</sup>. In parallel with these demands, the state itself has made a legislative change whose effects are beginning to be felt in Mabumba. A change in national law now allows for the alienation of land in former Native Authority areas into private ownership, through the authority of the District Council and Department of Lands. In colonial times, Northern Rhodesia had been divided into Crown Lands and Native Trust Lands. On the former, following the line of rail, many large farms were started by European settlers. Post-independence much of this land remained in private ownership, though increasingly the farmers were Zambian. Outside the former Crown Land, the state could appropriate land for state farms, settlement schemes and the like, but land formerly under Native Authorities was only alienated to a very limited extent (for example,

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Dispute over title to land has once previously been a major issue for the Ushi, when in the 1950s part of chief Milambo's was reserved as a game management area, removing local people's rights of usufruct. The people rebelled in 1953 and chiefs Milambo, Mulakwa and Kasoma Bangweulu were arrested. See Gould, 1989, pp.139-143.



in Luapula for provincial Cooperative Union farms). The change in the law means for the first time that individuals may alienate land that had previously always been under the control of chiefs and headmen.

One such case arose whilst I was in the field. A son of the headman in Kasanga village had risen to prominence in UNIP and was now Member of the Central Committee (MCC) for another province. Like many elite Zambians, he wanted a commercial farm as a business investment (both a way of making money and an "example" to the nation of producing more food). He chose to try at home, and asked his father, as anyone might of a headman, to allocate him some land for a farm. The difference between his and all other applications was that he wanted two hundred and fifty hectares<sup>27</sup>. It was learnt in Kasanga that once allocated, he would apply for title.

The case produced considerable local tension<sup>28</sup>. The taking of such a large area, much of it currently farmed by Kasanga villagers, would mean eviction of some thirty or more land users, and both permanent farms and citemene fields be affected. Several of my informants in Kasanga said they had stopped cutting citemene because the mwine (owner) had taken the land back again. To try to appease local feelings the MCC cut back his request to 150 hectares, as far as possible minimising the need for evictions. On leaving the field in September 1988 the application for title to the reduced area was being considered at the District Court in Mansa.

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<sup>27</sup> This is the maximum area alienable under the ordinance of 1985.

<sup>28</sup> See note 26.

Both village and state level "documentation" of rights in land are indicative of a tendency toward seeing land as a scarce resource. A related indicator is the incipient (similarly recent) attachment of monetary value to land. Whereas obtaining official title to land involves a payment of money to the state, the "letters" which villagers had begun requesting from the chief did not involve purchase. However, I did hear of isolated, though increasingly frequent, instances of people transferring rights in the use of land through money.

At the new basic secondary school in the chief's village several of the teachers have begun to open relatively large maize farms. One man, Mr Musonda<sup>29</sup>, had bought a couple of oxen, and in 1987 ploughed an area larger than that originally allocated to him. He had been granted the use of some land by the village headman of Chipanta, some of which had been allocated to the school by the chief. The chief felt that Musonda had already more land than he needed, and had ploughed too much of the school land, which should be divided more equitably, some being left for incoming school staff.

The resolution of the dispute was that Musonda should be allowed to use the school land for the rest of the season (he had already ploughed and sown), but give some of it up for 1988. What was perhaps more interesting in the context of this discussion was that he had also "bought" a farm adjacent to his block from someone else, an unprecedented event in Mabumba prior to the late 1980s.

Closer questioning revealed that the buying of a farm is something

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<sup>29</sup>

See Appendix 2.G and 2. H: household head in house 7.

that is only practised for land under permanent maize cropping. Musonda and others were adamant on the point that they would not think in terms of selling citemene fields. As to why the selling of maize farms had begun I was told:

"It is another way to get money. So many people want to start farms, especially strangers and new government workers, and most of the land has been taken by now. These people that are moving in have the money to pay."

What precisely was meant by selling in these circumstances was that the person using a piece of land would vacate and allow someone else to take over cultivation in exchange for a monetary payment. In the past rights of usufruct would change by invitation between matrilineally related kin, or on someone's death senior matrikin would adjudicate how any standing crop be divided, and the use of the land passed on. However, the involvement of money was a new phenomenon, and directed at strangers, since selling things to kin is inimical (see previous chapter).

The newness of selling land must be borne in mind. It remains an ambiguous practice in Mabumba. The land is "sold", yet there is no legally binding evidence of ownership; indeed the land still "belongs" collectively to the Ushi, under the guardianship of the chief as mwine mpanga, and the person who has "bought" might still pass on the use of the land to kinsmen. I came across one case in which this ambiguity led to trouble in settling a dispute. Andrea, who had cleverly seen the potential of the ambiguity, "sold" a maize farm to an incoming school teacher, then claimed at the chief's court that the stranger had "stolen" his land. The chief was placed in an awkward position as on the one hand he could not admit to transactions in land occurring without his knowledge or permission;

yet as an interstitial figure between village and government (and ostensibly encouraging his people to take part in "development") he could not afford flatly to deny the reality of the transaction and alienate the teacher. In the end he opted to return the use of the land to Andrea, on condition that he refund the money to the teacher, and agree to assist the teacher in finding an alternative site for his farm.

#### A summary

Full alienation of much land in Mabumba, in the sense that it exists in Western Europe, is still a fairly remote eventuality.

Nevertheless, the capitalist construction of land as a scarce resource and thence commodity is beginning to gain ground. One individual who is a powerful representative of the state has already alienated an area which once was occupied by many households. Perhaps others will follow. At the same time, "ordinary" villagers are becoming ever more litigious in a scramble for land on which to produce maize.

Of course a general pattern of growing scarcity of land, and its commoditisation in the setting of an increasingly capitalistic economy has been observed in the rural areas of many developing countries. Simply to iterate another example of this general process has not been my intention. It is the detailed constituents of the process which are interesting, and not homogeneous across all lands and peoples. The idea of land as alienable and quantifiable is specifically associated with maize in Mabumba. Bush land for citemene is still conceptualised as unlimited, and the principles of its use and inheritance have not changed (and there is no shortage of

land in any absolute sense). The notion of scarcity has followed the introduction of state articulated maize production, over a recent period of less than a decade. It being such a recent process, I cannot try to answer such a question as is the monetisation of land having effects on the principles of inheritance sustained by matriliney? At the time of field work, there were no empirical cases to be consulted; no one who had bought a maize farm had yet died. The question may in any case not be relevant. In Mabumba, positional succession remains the most important form of inheritance prescribed by matrilineal principles, not the transmission of material possessions (see chapter 3). It is not so much that monetisation of land contradicts existing inheritance patterns as that it provides an unprecedented focus for inheritance.

#### Whither distribution?

Conflicts over land use are evidence of the discursive distinctiveness of maize in relation to the longer-term use and distribution of resources. The key words quantification, accumulation and restriction apply, as when looking at other aspects of the maize enterprise; in this case contradicting the earlier treatment of land as spatially and temporally unbounded (most obvious in citemene). In concluding this chapter I wish to look at how this discursive understanding of maize adds to analyses of how rural economies are changing with the introduction of capitalist production. What are the main thrusts of social and economic differentiation in Mabumba?

Before doing this I must allude to some confusions in other analyses of the same issues, especially in terms of how they tend to construe matriliney in the context of social change. Holy (1987) has rightly

argued that many studies of the relations between matriliney and the capitalist economy fail because matrilineal ideology (the principle of belonging to a social group by virtue of connection through descent in the female line) has been confused with social practices meaningfully informed by that ideology (op. cit. p.2). Furthermore, unsupportable assumptions have been made, such as that the regulation of economic relations is universally the most important function of a descent group "Why can men not inherit property from their fathers while considering themselves members of a category of people who are descended in the matrilineal line...?" (ibid.). Analyses such as Poewe's (1981) find the reason for the decline of matriliney in its structural contradictions: between individual family and matrilineal descent group; marriage and sibling cohesion; and, ultimately, distributional communalism vs. productive individualism and investment. The process of the decline of matriliney is then not properly accounted for, since it is arrived at tautologically from a perspective which sees social reality in terms of a system of functionally and logically interrelated parts.

A distributionist perspective is obviously tied closely to a matrilineal ideology which stresses wide consumer sharing of products amongst kin; but it is not identical with it, being rather an analytical construct. What I have tried to show in this chapter is how distributionism can be seen to be working in an economy where everyone now needs access to cash, and opportunities to expand production. At the same time, there is little evidence to suggest that matrilineal ties, generally, have been weakened through this redeployment of resources. Matriliney is alive and well in Mabumba, if principles of descent are considered. It is possible of course

that increasing monetisation may lead to severance of wider economic relations with kin, as everyone wants scarce money, whilst direct monetary relations with kin are not acceptable. On the other hand, as we have seen, people use distributional strategies (with kin and strangers) to gain goods, services and labour. Distributional strategies have proved adaptive.

My evidence goes against those general arguments which posit inevitable structural antagonisms between matriliney and capitalism (Schneider and Gough, 1962, etc.). Where I can identify specific antagonism (between new forms of socioeconomic behaviour and social practice underpinned by matrilineal ideology) is in a rather different realm: styles of education, which can be differentiated between productionism and distributionism.

Looseness and unboundedness inform the way those operating within a distributionist discourse learn about the world. Village life is strongly experiential, and children in their early years have always learned much by copying others<sup>30</sup>. Later, the custom (lutambi) was that youths were given instruction in how to be functioning adult members of society through a series of narratives delivered by their male lineage elders; whilst their sisters would help mothers with women's tasks. The situation of this instruction was usually whilst sharing food with the elders at the large village nsaka.

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<sup>30</sup> Crehan makes much the same observation for Mukunashi, that Kaonde education is unspecialised, aimed at socialising children into a production unit and a more inclusive social and political unit (1987, pp. 88-89 and 229-230). Further, that whilst householding skills are learnt by all, it is instilled early on that males should not have to perform female tasks (but not vice versa), cf. Appendix 1 and chapter 4.

To some extent instruction was given in practical matters; basket and mat weaving, how to make hoe handles, etc. More importantly, it was about instilling the correct values of propriety, manners, and, above all, respect for senior lineage status (all connoted by the term mucinshi).

There were two major types of narrative. Imilumbe were histories of the Ushi, set in the far distant past (kale), which taught traditional values of age hierarchy and morality. Often, the characters in such stories were animal and human; at times interchangeably so. Such use of metaphorical anthropomorphisms has been well documented elsewhere (see Sr. Frost's analysis of Bemba imilumbe, 1977), and illustrates the strong indigenous interconnection between human and non-human environments, and how human moral behaviour has repercussions in what we would call the "natural environment". This same point I treat at greater length in chapter 9.

The second kind of narrative, called ipinda (pl. amapinda), was a sort of proverb or cautionary tale, used to remonstrate children and youths when they had done something wrong. It did not involve direct instruction, but commonly a question was asked, bearing a metaphorical relation to the misdeed; the answer to which would indicate to the miscreant where error lay.

In a more proverbial vein, an example of an ipinda would be:

"Uwabusuka, noobunga kuti bwaba uwabusuka."

*"If a person is clean, then so also will be his cassava flour."*

This again implies connection between human behaviour and the non-



human environment (and to have pure white ubunga to eat is deemed important to living properly)<sup>31</sup>.

My informant in these matters, Payson, bemoaned the demise of telling imilumbe and amapinda to local youth. He said they were no longer interested in listening, but would rather gain their knowledge from books.

It is these book learned people who most closely follow a productionist, and capitalist, ideal, and it is my contention that it is the process of education they have undergone which leads them there.

What formal education gives which the village does not is precise instruction in orthodoxy. There is always a correct and incorrect way of doing things; not a multiplicity of choices. And where agriculture is concerned (taught at both primary and secondary levels) the main subject remains maize farming, presented as a business, something separate from what villagers' are doing for themselves.

The apparent superiority of books and formal education over growing up in the village is most clearly seen in the activities and attitudes of local secondary school graduates. One particular pair in Mabumba serve well as exemplars. William and David had become

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<sup>31</sup> The term clean here, additionally, can refer both to cleanness in a physical sense and not having any moral black mark against oneself. The shinganga described in chapter 9 uses bowls of pure white cassava flour during healing rituals, and Turner (1964, p.5) found with the Ndembu a strong colour association of white with health and moral and physical cleanness.

friends when at school in one of the Copperbelt towns<sup>32</sup>. On leaving, William looked for jobs in town whilst David tried fish trading for a while. Neither turned out to be profitable. William then came to stay with his sister and brother-in-law (mulamu), a teacher at Mabumba basic primary school. At the same time, William's elder brother Daka left a well paid job with ZCCM<sup>33</sup> in Kitwe, and, on seeing the situation in Mabumba, thought it might be a suitable area for starting a relatively large maize farm. In the tradition of offering support to younger siblings, he asked if William would like to work for him on the farm, along with a friend. William invited David to stay, and in 1987 they began the farm by hiring machinery from the district council to stump the land.

This particular "enterprise" (and I use the term here in the sense applied in Western farm management) was different from what most of the small-scale maize producers in Mabumba were doing. Uniquely, Daka was employing his brother; in the first year for a subsistence allowance, thereafter as a "salary" (the English term he used) out of the maize takings if the farm proved successful. With their attitude of being "businesslike", none of them saw this as inappropriate behaviour between kin. And not only were they to be paid cash; they were to be full-time employees, effectively wage labourers. All other people in Mabumba, including the retired miners, only hired piece work labour on a casual basis (though William and David were to be managers as much as labourers,

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<sup>32</sup> These were two of the young men comprising the unique household described in chapter 3.

<sup>33</sup> Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines.

organising piece work as and when needed). To make sure the work got off to a good start, Daka sponsored his helpers to go on a lima farmer refresher course at Kalalushi farming college near Kitwe<sup>34</sup>.

The two friends saw their work as a stepping stone toward running their own farm businesses. Daka had advised them not to marry early, as they would lack the money to support a family. He was thirty-two and still single. What they stressed to me was that they were biding their time, working for Daka so they could "accumulate enough capital" to run an economically successful family. Relatedly, they saw "self-sufficiency" as an important aim in life. Before starting on the maize farm they had been growing vegetables together on the dambo. These were sold for cash which Daka was banking for them. David was pleased to be able to say he was now independent from his family in Kawambwa because of his income from vegetables; neither did he need material support from them, nor did he feel any need to send them anything.

Their future plans involved getting married about ten years later (they were in their early twenties), and to have no more than about three or four children each. Children were a potential drain on resources, rather than, as most Mabumba villagers would say, each a possibility for support in old age.

David and William thus spoke more or less directly the language of capitalism: produce surplus for investment in the nuclear family. Whilst they may be an extreme case (some of their attitudes were to

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<sup>34</sup>

This college was serving an area where agriculture is much more commercialised than in Mabumba.

do with what they had observed living in one of Zambia's most cosmopolitan areas, as well as being educated to secondary level), they were the focus of a sizeable group of young men in and around the chief's village. Others were following their example of vegetable growing on the dambo, and a fellow school graduate had taken charge of the group cultivation team (described in chapter 8). The establishment of Mabumba Basic Secondary School has vastly increased local opportunity to receive secondary level education (no fees for board and lodging being required), and the school ox-ploughed maize farm provides an example of farming visible to others than just the pupils.

In smaller ways, people who had undergone even brief formal training in maize production were adopting productionist attitudes (witness the lima farmer who castigated a woman's receiving loan inputs from someone else)<sup>35</sup>.

Elsewhere in rural Zambia the influence of formal education has been found to be relatively weak. Crehan, for example, portrays the primary school in Mukunashi as in no sense an organic part of the community, but something outside it whose teachings were largely irrelevant to village life (1987, p.251). I would argue the situation in Mabumba, because it has become a focus for government intervention, is rather different. Strong identification with what I am calling a productionist outlook, and participation in a fully capitalised mode of production, is to be found among a significant group who are precisely those who have been through the education

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<sup>35</sup> I deal in greater detail in chapter 6 with changing self-perceptions of those formally educated in new agricultural methods.

system to secondary level, or identify with them. Those many others I have described who put maize and its inputs to distributive ends are for the most part people who have entered production in a hit-or-miss fashion, adopting through copying what others do.

In conclusion, then, formal education (whether direct or indirect) is an important determinant of social differentiation in Mabumba. At present, apparent rejection of matrilineal obligations is to be found in only a few young men, who have been taught to see many relatives in terms of leaks rather than redistribution of resources. For the majority, redistribution remains an important principle, albeit one progressively adapted for survival in a monetised but inflationary economy. The evidence for the erosion of matriliney in Mabumba in the face of increasingly capitalised relations of production is at best equivocal. If, as the case seems elsewhere, its eventual demise is inevitable, this will have to depend on the spread of the influence of those who have been through processes of formal education. Monetisation in itself is not a sufficient explanation for the adoption of a productionist outlook: the style of productionist education allows it to be a tool for social control, reinforcing its own influence, as it creates a whole new rationale for evaluating people comparatively, of saying they have done something correctly or incorrectly. This is an issue I must now take up in chapters which consider the operation of the agricultural extension system in Mabumba, one of the major sources, and channels to sources, of education in maize production.

## Chapter 6: Extension, part one.

### Introduction

In this chapter the discussion of the relationship between "productionist" and "distributionist" perspectives is continued by reference to one of the agencies of "productionism", the extension branch of the Department of Agriculture. It is my contention that "productionism" is an orientation both of ideas and behaviour, and I hope to show here, therefore, taking issue with debates on how extension can best be done, that the outcome of extension cannot be understood as something separable from the relationship pertaining between the extension worker and the villager, and between the extension worker and the various layers of the institution for which (most often) he works; and that these relationships must be understood as having conceptual and practical dimensions.

A limitation of the institutional view, as I shall represent through observation of extension staff training workshops, is the tendency to see extension simplistically as a form of communication, which can be done well, or less well, depending on the methodology chosen. The allusions used in training staff are often graphic: the provincial agricultural offices are like a telephone; and the extensionist is like the wire, carrying the message which the farmer is waiting for at the other end. But, as Hedlund aptly put it, the extension worker himself is often the message, message being understood in the wider sense of what agriculture and development mean as the state manifested in the village (1984, p. 247). My treatment will allude at various points to Hedlund, whose paper was seminal in considering the social identity of extension workers as an aspect of understanding how they work. I will give greater emphasis, though, to the

perceptions villagers had of extension, and how these affected their responses to it.

I begin with a general consideration of village attitudes to extension and extensioners, and the perceived historical context of these attitudes, differentiating who thought what, and why. The argument then moves on to the extensioners' perceptions of villagers, taking care to explore superficially hidden agendas, such as what kinds of people extensioners consider themselves to be, and how this affects their social behaviour. Having thus set the scene, I will proceed to use the foregoing as a context for understanding some interactions between extension and village, with particular reference to a study I conducted in collaboration with ARPT on the operation of the Training and Visit (T&V) extension system and how it might be improved. Some concluding remarks will consider how "productionism" and "distributionism" provide a useful frame for understanding what extension is about in Mabumba.

#### Village perceptions of the history of extension.

1. "The extension service first came long ago, before Independence. The first things we were taught were how to read and write. Later, they taught us how to grow maize and vegetables, and also how to keep chickens. Before Independence it was the white people who came from Mansa to teach. Since Independence it has been Zambians".
2. "The extension service arrived after Independence. The first thing that they did was to mark out the land for those who wanted to grow maize. The people involved were few, and mainly those who already grew some maize with fertilisers. Some people also were instructed to start growing maize."
3. "From 1964 to 1970 when the extension service was new, the staff came out to the villages frequently to encourage the farmers. Now, those with small farms go to them for loans, but people are not visited at their homes. The extension people have nothing to teach to big farmers like me."

The first two quotations came from older women, one of whom had been trained as a "lima" farmer under the Finnida scheme<sup>1</sup>. The third was from an older man who maintained his own small hamlet with a large maize farm, away from the main village; a member of a group discriminated locally by the term balimi bakalamba (lit. "big farmers"). Several of the important themes for this chapter are revealed in them. The first is that extension is just one aspect of government involvement in the village, and various educational schemes have been brought, since before independence, often reiterating each other. For example, what is now termed functional literacy is taught by the Social Development Department, though the subjects of the courses are usually agricultural, and group farming schemes are that department's responsibility. In other words, agricultural extension is often not perceived as separate in any sense from other government departments, and current attitudes to extension and extension personnel are shaped by previous experiences. As we shall see, this tends to make for an ambivalent relationship between extensioner and villager.

Secondly, the specific association of extension with maize growing is established, and historically this has strongly coloured the expectations of the villagers, such that extension is still seen primarily as an education in how to grow maize, and little else. Even in spite of the changes in emphasis in national agricultural policy (at least at a rhetorical level), dialogues between extensioner and villager are extremely limited when crops other than cash maize are the subject. Mutual perceptions of the extensioner as

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<sup>1</sup> See the next chapter for details.



provider of resources (knowledge and access to inputs) coupled with a dearth of extension material on crops other than maize, reinforces the conceptual separation of maize cash farming (and vegetable growing) from all other agricultural practices, and limits the extensioner's room for manoeuvre.

The last quotation indicates that extension is perceived chiefly as a mechanism for entering maize production. Until the arrival of new, well-resourced schemes in the 1980s (such as the Lima schemes described below) those already growing maize perceived a stagnation in the system, with extension able to offer nothing new, a feeling compounded by widespread apathy among extensioners. However, the attitudes of big farmers as a group have to be seen partly as a facet of how they view their status in relation to government staff<sup>2</sup>.

The big farmer also mentions loans. Since the reorganisation of extension in 1981 and the introduction of various donor aided schemes, the granting of loans for the production of small areas of maize (less than one hectare) has been strongly emphasised, and is mediated through the extension service. Again, the relationship to loan taking is an ambivalent one, as loans represent both a resource and a potential source of indebtedness. I will try to bring out the tension that exists between the desires to be involved in certain types of economic activity, and reticence at being the objects of what amounts to a form of surveillance on the part of government agencies. And, how different groups of people are situated with respect to these two opposing influences.

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<sup>2</sup> See below.

Current perceptions and expectations of extension.

The most obvious division in the community in 1987, concerning the perceived role and activities of extension, was between those who were growing cash crop maize, and those who weren't<sup>3</sup>.

When asked about extension, non-maize growers expressed their separation, even exclusion from the processes of extension in such terms as:

"They just move up and down".

"The extension people do not come here because I am not yet a lima farmer".

"They are fit to teach those who grow maize".

"Only those people having farms (mafarms) are considered".<sup>4</sup>

And, in a slightly different sense, though relatedly:

"They only visit those whom they know personally".

Many who expressed such sentiments went further to say that it was certain kinds of people that the extension staff favoured; in general the young and those with some education. Indeed a high proportion of the non-maize growers were in their forties and older, and their statements about extension did not reflect frustration or resentment at being excluded but rather that maize farming was not really in their interests. As we have seen in chapter 3 seniority confers an advantageous position in distributive networks, and it is the expectation of older men and women that they they will benefit from the labour of others, so, with certain exceptions that have been

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<sup>3</sup> A similar situation prevailed in other parts of Zambia ten years previously (Pottier, pers. comm.).

<sup>4</sup> See chapter 2 on terminology peculiar to cash maize cropping.

described, they are not generally interested in becoming involved in an activity that is perceived to be difficult and time consuming<sup>5</sup>.

"I'm too lazy to start growing maize" was a half-serious comment that I often heard. If there was any resentment it was of a more diffuse kind: that the government was helping some people, but not others. This was particularly apparent in relation to loans, which entered the local economy not entirely in the ways expected by the loan organisations (see chs. 5 and 8). Loans gave access to saleable resources (the inputs themselves), but were tied to growing at least some maize.

On occasion, someone outside the group of maize growers would offer me positive opinions of extension activities. Interestingly, these opinions were expressed using the kinds of criteria that the extension service officialdom itself might use.

"Before extension came, hardly anyone here grew maize. Now more than half the people do, so extension have done well".

"They have done well to teach the farmers to grow maize. Now the government are helping even more by offering loans".

The second quotation came from an old and crippled man. He could not offer closer comment, he said, because he wasn't growing maize himself; and that in any case information from extension was best aimed at young men. These were not comments of a negative or embittered sort, though: he had, to add biographical detail, one son living at home, who had just started growing maize, and several other children away in the Copperbelt who remitted cash to him. In most cases where non-maize growers offered positive opinions of extension

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<sup>5</sup> See also labour graphs in chapter 4.

they were in fact in a position to benefit from maize through kin-based distributive networks.

Given that extension is now supposed to be working on food crops as well as cash maize, I asked about extension in relation to these crops. The responses, similar for all sections of the community, reflected the perception a. that extension still was only about cash maize production, and b. that it was expected to introduce entirely novel crops and growing methods which might create new cash opportunities.

"Why should they want to teach us how to grow cassava and millet when we already know these things?"

When interest was shown in extension involvement with food crops it was restricted to the provision of seed for groundnuts and beans, which were always said to be in short supply, and which in any case were food crops used considerably for sale on the informal market (see ch. 5). On one occasion someone who had noticed ARPT's trials on cassava spacing said it might be good if extension brought in new types of cassava that would produce larger tubers. Or, more generally, a person might express a desire to have a crop demonstration<sup>6</sup> on his or her land; especially for groundnuts or beans. But these kinds of interest have to be seen in their material and social contexts. What is grown in a demonstration is the property of the demonstrator, and inputs are supplied free, so a demonstration is a material resource, free except for the labour that the grower must provide. As importantly, though, hosting a demonstration can have desirable social consequences. Those which

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<sup>6</sup> See below.

grow well will be selected by the extension staff for field days. Such occasions raise the social profile of the demonstrator, along the dimension of involvement in the development of the state of Zambia, making for good relations with the "big farmers", government staff and party representatives.

This is rather different from what extension staff perceive demonstrations to be about: their training portrays them as a way of teaching by doing, to instruct villagers in improved methods of cultivation, which will lead to raised productivity and higher rural incomes. A much fuller account of extensioners' perceptions of their work follows below, the point here being to introduce some of the important differences between "productionist" and "distributionist" perspectives. It is common for demonstrations to be failures in an agronomic sense, and for this to appear to institution staff as due to the recalcitrance, stupidity, or deceit of the farmer. But the point of agreeing to host the trial in the first place may have been, for example, to get some bean seed to give to a distant female relative who will then reciprocate with beer. There are even occasions when a demonstration will obviously be an agronomic failure to farmer and extensioner alike; yet in its wider social context represent a success to the farmer. In 1987 one maize farmer who had recently started his own hamlet was pleased to be asked to run a demonstration on the rotation of beans and maize. Unfortunately the seed arrived late, and the crops had not matured by the end of the rains. But, because they appeared to be thriving, the field was chosen to be shown to the Minister of Agriculture on his tour of the province. The kudos attaching to the visit far outweighed for the farmer the fact that the harvest would be virtually zero. In

contrast, the Agricultural Assistant (AA) was dismayed by what he knew to be a sham, and irritated once again that the input services had upset the smooth transfer of his sound technical knowledge.

The example is one typifying a difference in perspective between institutions and villagers; that institutions focus narrowly on production whereas villagers always have distribution in mind also, and, just as importantly, that production is about more than the production process in itself, where activities may confer prestige as well as material resources. However, it cannot be assumed these perspectives are in static relation, and I shall consider how extension is affecting attitudes to resource use later.

To complete this general introduction to village attitudes to extension a little needs to be said about differentiation among those who are cash maize growers.

#### Small-scale farmers.

The largest group, small-scale farmers introduced directly or indirectly to maize through the Lima programme (through field staff and courses held at the Farm Institute in Mansa), and obtaining loans through the primary cooperatives, had a generally high opinion of extension, not least because they had become the primary target group, and instruction in maize growing was new to many of them. In terms of production within the village, most of this group had few cash earning opportunities prior to the introduction of government supported maize production, and the core element, men in their twenties and thirties, were indeed the people who fifteen years and more ago would likely have been leaving the villages in large numbers

in search of paid employment in the towns and mines. A significant proportion of them had benefitted individually from the lima training schemes through which they initially received free inputs.

Balimi bakalamba.

I have already referred to the complaints of one older farmer at the most commercialised end of production in Mabumba. To explain a little further the antipathy of such people toward extension, something must be said of how they perceive their social position in relation to government staff, and that the activities and persons of actual extension staff are perhaps more important here than the methodological issues which extension theorists are beloved of invoking.

The largest farmers in Mabumba are either headmen or men who have been absent in paid employment for a considerable time and retire home to farm with some accumulated capital. They tend to establish themselves away from the main villages, not to cut citemene, but to cultivate quite large areas under maize (ten hectares and more) where there is not likely to be competition over land. In so doing they establish themselves as leaders of small, fairly autonomous communities, hiring occasional piece work labour from the villages. Headmen of the larger villages frequently also are balimi bakalamba. The discussion of productive individualism in chapter 4 brought out why cooperation in production is unpopular in Mabumba. Likewise, extension is considered by someone in relation to their personal production circumstances. It is generally true that government department work and workers are approved of if they come to visit and advise individuals; not otherwise. No more is this true than of the

balimi bakalamba who, as conceptually senior and powerful individuals, will expect others to come and attend on them, not the converse<sup>7</sup>. The extension staff are mostly young men, and definitely to be regarded as juniors. So, not only do the large farmers think that extension can teach them nothing new: they also would not deign to go looking for advice from staff, and are aware that the focus of extension has moved from them to small-scale farmers and women in particular.

This situation very closely parallels that described by Hedlund for Northwestern province. There the local big farmers, called wamuneni in KiKaonde, despised the extension workers as social inferiors with nothing to teach them (1984, p.240). In the context of Mabumba a slight unorthodoxy in the person of the AA had compounded the situation. As we shall see, he was young and still enthusiastic about his work, and skillful in the presentation of his extension advice. He was quick to notice the ways people were doing things, and in promoting the lima training schemes and expressing solidarity with the small-scale farmer was likewise quick (too quick it might seem) to denigrate the balimi bakalamba as a group, for bad field management of maize. Many, he said, were poor agriculturalists: they had merely copied maize growing from others, perhaps in the Copperbelt, and continued to survive with poor yields simply because they set out with more capital. Expressing such sentiments, although he was new to the area, further alienated him from the already disillusioned large farmers: to impune the knowledge or competence

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<sup>7</sup> See chapter 3 on kinship for discussion of the importance of seniority to the Ushi.



of one's seniors is not acceptable<sup>a</sup> (cf. Pottier, 1988, pp. 102-103).

In concluding this introduction the spatial element in extension needs mentioning, as logistics have a role in determining the relations between extension and the village: the reorganisation of agricultural camps in 1981, with the introduction of the T&V extension methodology was expressly to gain better staff coverage over a large, sparsely populated rural sector. Referring to Map 2, Appendix 4, the areas of Mabumba camp covered by extension visits were restricted largely to the villages on the main Mansa-Samfya road, as well as Mpemba and Monga, both of which were connected to the main road by good secondary roads. In the past the small villages along the dambo to the west of Monga had been very infrequently visited, as they were too far to walk to and the AA's bicycle was frequently out of action. In 1987 the new AA began to make more visits, but these were soon forestalled by his having to take on extra responsibilities. When I visited Kapoko, the most distant of these villages, I found only two people growing cash maize, one of them a man who had been trained under the lima scheme two years before. He said as extension came so infrequently, few people had learnt about maize, and that in any case it was difficult to get the required inputs as they had to be carried by hand or bicycle from Monga, the nearest cooperative sub-depot, which was some

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<sup>a</sup> I state that this AA's approach was unorthodox because the received attitude amongst most extension staff is that semi-commercial and commercial farmers have become so because they are literate, can follow advice, are progressive, risk bearing and so forth. He alone spoke out in a staff training meeting to make negative comments about the characteristics of these farmers.

10km away<sup>9</sup>. I also came across several households returned from elsewhere whose head was a native of Kalasa or Kalaliki, but who had stayed in Mabumba and Chibiliti specifically to be within easy reach of services for growing maize<sup>10</sup>.

The camps either side of Mabumba contained the local primary cooperatives, Chinkopeka and Kaole. In both there were high concentrations of maize growers, who had the input facilities closely to hand. At Kaole the AA visited very infrequently, but his presence was not missed much, as farmers perceived themselves to be adequately informed on maize production. At Chinkopeka, the agricultural camp coincided with the cooperative depot, and the AA had been there for six years. His relationship with local farmers was rather different from that in Mabumba, and the relative proportion of maize growers, and their levels of production, also differed. The situation in Chinkopeka I will describe in greater detail in the next chapter, with respect to the T&V system, but it must be borne in mind that the relationship between village and extension, because it is so strongly to do with maize, is caught up also in the relationship with the input infrastructure.

#### The camp officer in Mabumba

Thus far I have introduced in a general sense village perceptions of extension; now the approach will be reversed, by focusing on the particular biography of the AA in Mabumba, and his experiences during

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<sup>9</sup> The other was the woman mentioned in chapter 5 who had used someone else's inputs.

<sup>10</sup> The spatial deployment of people related to maize production is discussed more fully in chapter 9.

the agricultural year 1987-88. Important detail emerges from such a micro-level analysis, but there are problems in separating contingencies from generalities: Mr Fundisha had arrived in Mabumba only five months before I did, so he was still in the process of introducing himself to the area; and quite early in the growing season he had to take over the job of block supervisor, which effectively curtailed visits to all but the nearest villages. Given these limitations, I will try to identify significant aspects of the person of an extension worker, a theme that will be taken up again in the next chapter, for a wider sample of staff, in terms of their relationship to the administrative structure.

Mr Fundisha was twenty-eight years old, and Mabumba was his second posting since qualifying. He came originally from Kazembe, the paramountcy of the Lunda in the Luapula Valley. Though primarily a fishing area, this did not seem to influence people's opinions of his competence as an agriculturalist. The Ushi and the Lunda are very close linguistically and kinship terminology and usage is practically identical. Mr Fundisha said that differences in customs (ntambi, pl.)<sup>11</sup> could be a problem for government staff, especially concerning marriage practices, it not being uncommon for young staff to want to marry into the communities where they worked. The fact he came from a fishing community was not significant as, he said, "we are all government trained agriculturalists": the professional, institutional role of Fundisha significantly bracketed his work from evaluation along lines of ethnicity. Never did I hear complaints

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<sup>11</sup>

As Cunnison noted, ntambi are practices which distinguish different tribes (mitundu, pl.), not clans or lineages (1959, p. 56).

against him or other government workers relating professional competence to ethnic background. Where ethnicity was raised, it was to do with personal conduct.<sup>12</sup>

Before coming to Mabumba Fundisha had been at an agricultural camp in Mansa north, within the peri-urban area. He much preferred Mabumba because here people were "serious about farming". At his old posting they had been too interested in money-making activities in town (various forms of petty trading), and the major activity in the villages had been brewing beer and selling it. The men, who worked in town during the day, were drunkards, and it was generally bad that the people were not much interested in being self-sufficient, and relied on buying much of what they needed, including food. Fundisha was not himself teetotal, but nevertheless drank very little, and approved of the fact that chief Mabumba discouraged people from drinking during the working day. He had found in Mabumba much enthusiasm for growing both maize and food crops, and he was frequently approached about his vegetable garden on the dambo, both for advice and purchases.

The good opinion of him that was developing in the chief's village was, he felt, largely connected with the vegetables. People were impressed that he had something new to bring to them other than how

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<sup>12</sup> Jealousy over women was a common reason (or excuse) for local men to indict others on the grounds of ethnic difference, claiming that other Zambian peoples were bad where sexual morality was concerned. Apart from discussion of admixture of languages (see chapter 9), this was the only context in which I found ethnicity made an issue.

to grow maize<sup>13</sup>. It was also to do with the fact that he was seen to be working hard, and visiting the small-scale farmers in their fields. Which was not the case, apparently, for the two previous AAs, who just spent their time (according to village gossip) on their own farms, and in drinking and fornication.

Fundisha was perhaps a good example of an extension worker at his particular career stage. He was not yet saddled with the cynicism typical of longer-established workers, yet he was aware of the limitations of a career as a field extension worker, and his current attitude was connected with his long-term professional ambitions. At the time of field work he was doing a correspondence course to gain some 'O' levels, which would qualify him to apply for a diploma course at the Natural Resources Development College in Lusaka. With such a diploma he could obtain a district level job in some crop or other resource specialism, and reasonable prospects for promotion. With his current qualifications he could not progress further than Senior Agricultural Assistant, only one step higher than his existing position.

With these aims in mind he was keen to create a good impression with his employers, though in any case he took his job seriously and was intelligent in his approach. Like Hedlund's extension worker in Northwestern province (1984, p. 233), he identified himself with progressiveness and the role of the educator, and adopted some urban patterns in his lifestyle, such as buying bread rolls and tea from

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It is important to remember that these vegetables, like maize, were introduced crops requiring inputs available only from institutional outlets. "Traditional" vegetables such as impwa grown on citemene did not figure in this new enthusiasm.

Mansa, and eating mealie meal instead of cassava, whenever available. But that is not to say that he despised rural life. On the contrary, he believed in agriculture as the road to national development; gaining some of the benefits of the towns he wished to demonstrate as a reward for hard work in farming, and that it was good, especially for the young men, to stay in the villages, rather than end up as "loafers" in town.

His initial response to being questioned on problems in his work was to say that the new focus on women in agriculture was proving hard to implement. He found, and this remained so during 1987-88, that few women would attend public meetings. This he attributed to the association of maize growing with male work (and in so saying expressed the identity of extension with maize), an association he believed to have originated in the male extension staff going to give advice largely to men, and that men were jealous of allowing their wives freely to mix with other men in public. On the whole he found women less interested in learning than men, and implicitly viewed them as subordinate, physically and intellectually, a common male perception in the province (he said, for example, that women could not understand the credit system)<sup>14</sup>.

#### The developing relationship

During the course of the 1987-88 season Fundisha was involved in a number of activities, and the pattern of a developing relationship

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<sup>14</sup> There are currently very few women employed by the Extension Branch. Even if there were, this might not make such a large difference to the structure of public meetings; at meetings held by the new female Social Development Officer in 1988, most of those attending still were men.

with the local community began to emerge. To give some idea of the activities of extension workers, I reproduce here an annual breakdown obtained from extensioners at a provincial training workshop<sup>15</sup>.

| <u>Activity</u>                                                                       | <u>Number of days spent per year</u> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Field days                                                                            | 7                                    |
| Demonstrations                                                                        | 9                                    |
| Farm visits                                                                           | 118                                  |
| Lecturing                                                                             | 12                                   |
| Discussions                                                                           | 25                                   |
| Other (data collection, issuing LPOs, collecting salaries, attending funerals, etc.). | 25                                   |
| Agricultural shows                                                                    | 3                                    |
| Office work                                                                           | 29                                   |
| Staff training meetings                                                               | 4                                    |
| Seminars/workshops                                                                    | 10                                   |
| Reading research reports                                                              | 2                                    |

(Office work consists primarily of writing monthly reports for the District Agricultural Officer)<sup>16</sup>.

Certain of the activities, such as office work, are year round, whereas others are seasonal. Rather than consider these abstractly, I will document Fundisha's year.

On my arrival, preparations were under way for the new agricultural season. Fundisha had been busy administrating applications for input loans, and his main contact with farmers since his arrival in April had been through them approaching him for loans. Gaining his approval for loans depended on two things. First, a record of a

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<sup>15</sup> Lima Extension Workshop: Mansa Farm Institute, 28-29 December, 1987.

<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that these were perceptions of how time is spent, averaged over about one hundred workers. It is clear they perceived their activities as focused on visiting individual farm households (or at least made that claim). This was, they said, because farmers appreciated individual attention, especially "subsistence" farmers, who felt intimidated in the presence of "emergent" and "commercial" farmers. These farmer categories are explained in greater detail in the following chapter.

farmer's previous cropping history (except for first time applicants), to see whether he or she appeared to be making good use of the inputs<sup>17</sup>. Fundisha said farmers would often try to "hide their yields" in the belief that a putative crop failure would relieve them from having to pay off loans, but that he was effectively putting a stop to this by threatening his power of veto on future applications, telling farmers he could judge how many bags of maize they should be getting from a particular field, and would be visiting their fields during the growing season to see how much they had planted and whether this tallied with what they had applied for.

The second requirement for approving a loan, on land not previously cropped with maize (all applicants), was for Fundisha to demarcate the land. This meant literally going out with a tape measure or "lima rope" and marking off square or rectangular blocks of one or more limas extent<sup>18</sup>.

By October Fundisha had begun to hold public meetings for the selection of contact farmers to work with him in the T&V system. These meetings he treated partly as information gathering exercises to learn more about local farming, and to make himself more familiar to the local villagers.

The first attempted meeting was in Mabumba itself. On two occasions nobody turned up, and this seemed tied up with protocol in the

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<sup>17</sup> This information was, when aggregated, also used to make crop forecasts as part of national monitoring for likely surpluses or deficits in different parts of the country.

<sup>18</sup> One lima is 0.25 ha. A fuller discussion of the lima schemes is given in chapter 7.



chief's village: Fundisha should have called the meeting through the chief and invited him as a guest, but failing to do so, even those he had told personally did not come. On the first occasion, he had also made the mistake of calling the meeting at a farmer's house, which led to accusations of favouritism. From then on he always held public meetings at village schools or by the headman's house. With these lessons learned, the selection meetings in other villages were rather more successful.

At a meeting to select contact farmers in Kasanga

About forty people attended the meeting in Kasanga, of whom thirty-two were men, eight women; a very large group for an Ushi village meeting, though less than ten percent of the population.

Fundisha began by introducing me, as someone who had come to help improve the extension service, and who would be coming back to talk to people (about the contact farmer system). He proceeded to outline what contact farmers were, as important links between him and the farming community. Then the crucial matter, of how they should be chosen. Fundisha wanted the four contacts in each village to be representative of the whole community. They should not come just from among the Lima and commercial farmers (here he used the English terms). Then, that because of the government's plan for "women's participation in agriculture" (with a Bemba translation), half of the contacts should be women. Fundisha invited questions, which almost exclusively concerned access to resources to grow maize, with particular emphasis on the problems of input delivery via the cooperative union. Eventually, he managed to steer discussion back to the issue of contact farmers, inviting the people to make their

choice of representatives. In the case of the men, the headman suggested someone who had been eagerly asking questions, and another man, who knew Fundisha and who spoke English well, volunteered himself. Among the women there was much less enthusiasm, and two were eventually cajoled by their companions. As I later discovered, all four contacts turned out to be individuals already well established in cash maize production. This turned out to be a common pattern at selection meetings.

### Teaching

With the contacts chosen, and the rains started, Fundisha's next main task was to give lectures on cultivation and planting techniques. These usually began with some sort of rhetorical introduction on the theme of the importance of farming and who should consider themselves as farmers, stressing that all people were farmers irrespective of which crops and how much they grew<sup>19</sup>.

He would proceed to ask about local cropping practices, making suggestions where he felt his training indicated superior methods, for example on the selection and timing of planting of cassava cuttings, so as to minimise the risks of spreading mealy bug<sup>20</sup>. At one meeting he learned that villagers in Mpemba pounded gourd seeds to obtain oil for cooking, and that a certain amount of finger millet was now being grown on permanent fields. These matters, he told me, he had not previously been aware of. He was not reporting them to

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<sup>19</sup> In line with the thinking of the provincial Extension Training Officer. See section on staff training in the next chapter.

<sup>20</sup> The mealy bug infestation of the 1980s is considered in greater detail in chapter 9.

his seniors, though, because he did not feel they were of interest for extension policy.

In spite of his exploratory and non-dogmatic approach, Fundisha often found the focus of a meeting ineluctably becoming maize. Sometimes this was a matter of tact: on one occasion, having asked whether finger millet was broadcast or dibbled (planted in lines) he was faced with the indignant response of the men that broadcasting was the only sensible way to grow millet. He successfully avoided a heated argument by changing the subject to maize, safe ground from both sides' points of view. More often, the invitation of questions from villagers finished discussion of anything but maize. At that time of year (late October) the major interest was in getting Fundisha to come and demarcate more land for the crop.

By December meetings were convened more or less solely for discussing maize planting. For one of these in Monga the chairman of Chinkopeka Cooperative Society had arrived at the same time to deliver fertilisers, and no one would go to Fundisha's meeting until they had received these, in spite of the chairman's suggestion they have the meeting first. Indeed, a preoccupation with the material aspects of growing maize, and the large hindrance that the input institutions represented coloured many of the interactions between villagers and extension. At this particular meeting Fundisha began by telling the villagers which varieties of maize would be delivered by the seed company this year, and which of these they should use. Unfortunately, one of the most popular varieties had not yet been delivered, and with its optimum planting date only a few days away, it should not be chosen. In questions which followed a man

commented:

"Your teaching is quite good, but when LCU bring seeds and fertiliser they have very little information to give us. They tend to bring MMV600<sup>21</sup> earliest, which is wrong."

Fundisha's response to this was:

"You know Mr. Mupupu in town; he would sell you anything. Well, it's the same with the people in the cooperatives. They are just business men, who know nothing about farming. That is why they get things wrong and deliver things at the wrong time. Without the services of the extension staff, government plans for agriculture would come to nothing."

Always, there was a tension for the villagers between interest in the knowledge which extension could give, and its relative ineffectiveness in dealing with practical problems. By and large those quite new to maize growing believed what Fundisha had to say, and field demonstrations, when successful, illustrated the superiority of recommended practices (at least when measured by the indicators of productionism). Yet this knowledge was of little use if the resources were not available. For example, I did find examples of farmers using seed from previous hybrid crops, out of sheer expediency. It was where Fundisha could provide access to material resources, through the lima training schemes, that he was most popular; and the different and more positive relationship between extension and village in Chinkopeka camp was also to do with material resource access, as we shall see in the next chapter.

For the remainder of the meeting in Monga Fundisha discussed and demonstrated maize planting. Here, quantification became very apparent. He began by asking what the correct plant spacing should be, and received the (right) answer 25cm (expressed in English).

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<sup>21</sup> MMV600 is a composite maize type which is relatively tolerant of late planting, one of the qualities for which it was bred.

When asked by someone else how big 25 cm was he produced some small sticks cut into 25 cm lengths, and showed how they could be used to mark forked branches for use as dibble sticks. He went on to fertiliser application, explaining the importance of timing and, by analogy with human growth, what sizes healthy plants should have reached by certain ages.

In later questions it was apparent that farmers were looking for yardsticks by which to judge their own performance:

"If a man has a one lima farm and he plants it with MMV600, what yield should he get?"

In reply Fundisha told him five bags or more (and made some comparison of yields with other varieties). Another then asked by which date he must plant MMV600, to which Fundisha replied:

"By 30 December. I myself once planted three lima in January, and obtained only twelve bags."

Occasionally there would be a question of a more searching and critical kind, such as a man observing that when maize is planted too closely the plants grow fast towards the light, producing slender stems and small cobs. As the different varieties of maize differed in the way they grew, would the best spacing for planting not also vary? The reply to this was a resounding orthodoxy: always stick to the 25cm spacing. Though Fundisha was interested to learn what farmers were doing, it was his job to communicate the findings of government research to them, and he did not encourage experimentalism on their part. Or rather, he believed in the necessity of enforcing the methods he had been taught, as part of an overall plan for development (such as that seed should not be reused because the state required uniform grain quality).

After December Fundisha disappeared largely from the scene on taking over the responsibilities of the ailing block officer. His involvement in the field thereafter was largely restricted to the choosing of demonstration farmers and setting up the demonstrations. With one exception (the maize and beans chosen by the Provincial Agricultural Officer to be shown to the minister) these demonstrations grew poorly through late planting, and because the demonstration farmers did not follow instructions carefully on how to plant. It was clear that several of the farmers viewed the demonstrations as free access to resources and no more, and were aware the AA had little time to visit and see what they were doing. This was especially true of demonstrations on beans, a crop for which extension advice was thought irrelevant (except among some of the productionistic maize growers), and any opportunity to get free seed gladly taken.

Though, as described below, the contact farmer system manifestly was not succeeding, (at least by the criteria of its overseers), Fundisha did find towards the end of the season a growing stream of farmers (mostly men) coming to him asking for specific information.

Significantly, they were all people growing cash maize. The commonest questions were on how to grow vegetables, such as turnips and Irish potatoes, the possibilities of obtaining draft oxen, and more new requests for loans to grow maize. Occasionally questions would arise on the "traditional" crops (though never cassava), but these were of the sort "can we use fertilisers on groundnuts or finger millet, and if so which kinds?", i.e. all with reference to the use of resources obtainable only through government infrastructure.

The T&V system as seen from the village.

I wish to consider the T&V system from two points of view: how it operated in the social context of Mabumba, and how it was theorised and taught to extension staff at provincial level. The second view will be considered in the next chapter, which looks at the relationship upwards from the field staff to the district and provincial administrations.

A little background information is necessary here to make clear what the T&V system is supposed to be about.

The T&V system (or, more accurately, method) of organising agricultural extension was first proposed in the 1970s and is definitively associated with the World Bank (e.g. Benor and Harrison, 1977) who first used it in Bank-assisted smallholder irrigation projects. Since then it has been adopted in many developing countries over diverse farming systems.

The concept arose from a widespread realisation that extension services tended not to be cost effective because of staff productivity being low:

".....the general record of agricultural extension in developing countries is one of haphazard and ineffectual farm visits to a small number of already fairly successful farmers, indifferent levels of technical knowledge and conscientiousness among field staff, together with a relative neglect of agricultural research and therefore an absence of commercially viable improvements to be provided by the extension staff."  
(Howell, 1982, p.2).

The essence of T&V consists in regular training sessions for field staff at which extension messages are discussed, in conjunction with frequent (often fortnightly) visits by these staff to representatives of the farming community who are to act as disseminators of extension

messages to the rest of the community. Such regular alternation of training and visiting should, theoretically, allow easy and continuing evaluation of field staff performance, a factor singularly lacking in older extension methods. So much is common to all T&V systems, though they may vary considerably by region, administrative structure and farming system.

In Zambia the institutional arrangements to operate such a system were introduced in 1981, the Contact Farmer being the representative for the farming community who was to act as go-between for extension. By 1987 the system appeared still not to be working in Luapula, and the provincial Extension Training Officer (ETO) had concluded that important reasons for this were lack of cooperation from contact farmers and biased contact selection so that only the more resource-rich members of the community were being represented (his source of data being the field staff, quizzed during training sessions).<sup>22</sup> It is these two apparent reasons which I examined in detail in Mabumba, and which form a point of comparison with how the extension administration conceived problems. Already I have described one of the meetings to select contact farmers. Given Fundisha's rhetoric about who should be contacts, a summary of the degree of involvement

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It is germane to mention the information which drew the conclusion that the system was not working. On the assumption that extension staff were trying to deliver uniform information on maize husbandry, the provincial level staff generated computer models of likely yield differences between farmers, taking into account factors such as rainfall and soil variations. In practice the coefficients of variation were far higher than would be expected from the models. Hence the conclusion that extension was not working. This is a quintessentially productionist conclusion: using a single statistic to arrive at a statement about a very complex situation, and quantifying the work of extension, which is as much social as technological.



in maize farming of all those chosen is interesting.

Table 1. Levels of cash maize production by contact farmers

| <u>Village</u> |        | <u>Number of farmers growing:</u> |                 |            |            |            |
|----------------|--------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                |        | <u>None</u>                       | <u>&lt;1 ha</u> | <u>1ha</u> | <u>2ha</u> | <u>3ha</u> |
| Kasanga:       | Male   | 0                                 | 2               | 0          | 0          | 0          |
|                | Female | 0                                 | 2               | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Mpemba:        | Male   | 0                                 | 0               | 2          | 0          | 0          |
|                | Female | 0                                 | 2               | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Yasakwa:       | Male   | 0                                 | 0               | 1          | 0          | 1          |
|                | Female | 0                                 | 1               | 1          | 0          | 0          |
| Monga:         | Male   | 0                                 | 0               | 2          | 1          | 0          |
|                | Female | 0                                 | 1               | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Kapoko:        | Male   | 0                                 | 1               | 0          | 0          | 0          |
|                | Female | 0                                 | 0               | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <u>TOTALS:</u> |        | <u>17:</u>                        | <u>9</u>        | <u>6</u>   | <u>1</u>   | <u>1</u>   |

(After failures to hold selection meetings no contact farmers were chosen in the chief's village).

All of the farmers selected were growing maize with inputs, and fifteen of them were receiving loans to do so (from a primary co-operative society, the Lima Bank, or as a Finnida lima farmer). The contacts in the higher production categories were mainly the more senior men (for example, one in the Monga group was a village headman); the women were younger, and were people who had been trained recently in maize production under the Finnida lima scheme. In practice, then, in spite of the AA's protestations, those who were selected by the community (volunteered themselves, or were volunteered) were all people actively engaged in the one activity extension was perceived to be about (cf. Hedlund, 1984, p. 239).

#### The system in action

During the course of the agricultural year I interviewed all of the

contact farmers twice, and discussed what they were doing within the wider community. Bearing in mind this was the second time only that contacts had been chosen, and that the AA was otherwise occupied for much of the time, what happened was clearly rather different from what the theorists expected.

"Contact farmers are representatives of the farming community to the Agricultural Assistant. They should act as a bridge, communicating urgent information from the AA to other farmers. They should identify farmers who have problems, and pass this information to the AA so he will know whom to visit. They can also, after a little training, help the AA in practical ways such as demarcating land and showing farmers how to plant."

This was Fundisha's version of what contacts should be doing, according to what he had learned during his training. My study suggested that contact farmers saw the role much more in terms of being a personal resource; given the general inertia in 1987-88 it would otherwise be surprising that so many of them were keen to continue as contacts.

Except for those selected in absentia, all the contacts knew that they were supposed to report farmers' problems and queries to Fundisha. About half of them were not approached with any requests during the year; this, they felt, was because farmers were not experiencing any problems. Most requests which did come concerned maize: how to plant, what to do about poor germination rates, when would the inputs be delivered, and how to deal with certain pests such as stalk borer (mfumbafumba). People also wanted to have more land demarcated, and vegetable seeds. On one occasion a man wanted help to rid his cassava of mealy bug (kolela), but the contact farmer did not bother to report this as he felt the extension staff were only interested in maize.

Some contacts also believed they should inspect other people's fields to see how they were planting maize, and correct them if necessary. In one case a woman lima farmer went and demarcated someone else's land herself as Fundisha had failed to return to her village. However, the response of other villagers to this role was equivocal: one of the contacts felt he had not been visited with requests for assistance because people feared their farming activities would be policed, and that crops not coming up to the standards set by extension would be severely criticised, or even destroyed.

Among those who were not contact farmers there was little awareness of the scheme except for those few who had attended the selection meetings. Of the latter, most said the contacts served no purpose for them as their problems (if they had any) were to do with input delivery, or disputes over land boundaries (which came up in relation to demarcation). Input delivery was beyond the AA's jurisdiction, and land disputes were properly the domain of traditional authority or the local court.

By the end of the year, some of the contacts had become disillusioned with their position. They had received no response to requests they had passed on to Fundisha (e.g. to obtain pesticides to deal with mfumbafumba). Most, though, were optimistic that being a contact farmer would give them personal access to new technological knowledge, and secondly, would allow them to teach other people.

Wanting to teach others might appear a magnanimous gesture. But, in concluding this chapter, I wish to argue it is a strategy to do with status which situates the actor within productionism. Being a teacher identifies a person with the role of government agencies in

the village, and allows certain kinds of knowledge-based power over others not common to the kin based polity, but in some senses complementary to it. One woman who wanted to teach was also she who had gone out and demarcated others' land of her own accord. She was the wife of a nwipwa of the village headman (the one tipped as most likely to succeed him). But she was also young, and would not have such a visible presence yet except through her training as a Lima farmer and subsequent activities.

To be specific, those who came forward to become contact farmers were those growing small areas of maize (less than five hectares), the targets of the extension programme since its reorganisation in 1981. The balimi bakalamba were not among them. All had some history of contact with extension before, whether through lima training schemes or direct contact with field staff who had preceded Fundisha. Again, most of them had not lived away from Mabumba for significant periods, and were eager to make the most of economic opportunities in the village. In some cases, offering or petitioning to become a contact farmer was clearly part of articulating specific strategies. One man had been retired from an office job with Zambia Airways, due to an injury, and was seeking a way of demonstrating his educational superiority whilst remaining in the village. Becoming a contact farmer helped him to secure the position of manager of Kaole cooperative society, which he knew in advance had fallen vacant.

He was among the group of young secondary educated men (and occasional woman) who had seen that good jobs commensurate with their education were no longer available in the towns, and who were loathe to be idle in town because of the rural resettlement schemes

introduced by the government to help solve the problem of urban unemployment (schemes that involved, in some cases, forcible removal and loss of autonomy through having to work on co-operative schemes under pseudo-military conditions).

To this group, becoming some kind of teacher would confer a sort of administrative power; the dependence they once felt on extension for knowledge of maize production being devolved onto others less or as yet not involved in maize production. However little they might do as contact farmers, the position legitimised their passing judgement on other people's practices.

Of course, the sword was double edged. It did not touch those not growing maize, until or unless they tried to do so. For those others who were maize growers, having contact farmers was regarded as a mixed blessing, albeit one they could not yet comment much on because it was such a new phenomenon. They would go to contacts for some specific request for resources, and might ask for land demarcation as a prerequisite for getting loans. But they resented the idea of surveillance, of being watched and judged, an inescapable aspect of entering cash maize production.

So, it tended to be the young, with some sort of formal education who became caught up in the activities of extension, though, as we saw in chapter 2 other groups, such as older female household heads, also figured significantly. The balimi bakalamba, almost as much as the non-maize growers, situated themselves outside the influence of extension, because it was not a resource that could add materially to their agricultural production and because they felt extension staff tried to undermine their status. Both mentally and spatially they

situated themselves away from the main communities, autonomous and rich. Though returned to their home areas, they very much lived in a style they had become accustomed to in the towns, and saw themselves as having different values from most of the rural community, premised on urbanity.

The balimi bakalamba were the most obviously capitalistic farmers in Mabumba, in the sense of reproducing themselves through the generation of exchange value and its reinvestment in the maize enterprise, employing others as wage-labour equivalents. Yet they stood largely outside the educational influence of the productionist institutions. For this reason, it becomes necessary to ask whether both the balimi bakalamba and the small farmers are subject to the same forces and processes of social and economic differentiation. In my conclusions I will raise what might otherwise be termed the issue of class formation, in reexamining relations between materialist and discourse analyses. To conclude this chapter I need to make an important argument about how productionist influence seems to be spreading in Mabumba, in its articulation through extension.

We have seen that initial interest in extension often depended on seeing it as a means of access to resources, both material and status. But beyond this, the process of involvement with extension can be seen as establishing new cognitive patterns, which themselves can be related to a wider set of institutional influences.

#### Measurement: production and the self

Food and its production has been and remains a central social and practical concern of Mabumba villagers. A person who can procure and

offer a wide range of foods will be the subject of praise. The greatest approbation, customarily, goes to those men who can obtain fresh bush meat through hunting (see Appendix 1; cf. Richards, 1939, p.342 ff). Someone who can regularly supply the more desirable cultivated vegetable relishes (particularly groundnuts and beans) will also find great favour. When someone is described as working hard in this context (babomba sana sana) it is more the variety of products there for distribution than the absolute quantity of product which is being thought of (though obviously the more a person produces, the more can be distributed to other people).

If one considers people who have entered cash maize production, it is apparent that a new set of attitudes is emerging about what constitutes industriousness, and which specifically relate productive capacity to the quality of the producer. What are these attitudes and how are they mediated?

#### Discipline and quantify.

Productionism characteristically considers agricultural production through measurement; linear, digital quantification. As we saw in chapter 5, the conception of land, when used for cash maize production, has changed in line with certain administrative requirements, to be seen as a bounded entity more individuated and subject to litigation than the mpanga used for cutting citemene. Correlatively, production on such fields, once fixed spatially, can

be assessed as yields per unit of land area<sup>23</sup>, and this is how institutions assess production. Productionism uses these measures to set conventional standards, on the basis of which farmers are categorised, and their production rated as good, bad or average.

#### Assessing production.

That cash maize production can be interpreted as being a discourse is strongly supported by the way in which agricultural production standards are becoming the basis for evaluative categorisations of people. Among young male maize farmers, I found a common subject at beer parties was the ranking of individuals according to how many bags of maize they had grown; i.e. a sort of league table of achievement among young men in the village. They would boast success in much the same way as for having cut a large citemene field, but through a finely graded scale allowing precise judgement. They would also define other groups of people negatively in relation to themselves through production figures, especially as a means for throwing scorn on some of the balimi bakalamba (who nominally could demand respect through senior status). Thus, one retired miner was laughed at when he only obtained fourteen bags of maize from a twelve lima farm. The blame for his poor achievement was laid on lack of education. Likewise, young educated maize farmers will denigrate citemene as a destructive and backward activity, an attitude which remains ingrained in the Zambian secondary curriculum (cf. Gould, 1989, p.73).

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Previously no such measurement was made. I came across no measure for the area of fitemene (other than saying that they were large or small), and production levels were judged more from the size of a person's granary (for finger millet).



This same group have also begun discussing themselves in terms of the pseudo-social categories which extension uses. Again at a beer party, I heard a lively conversation with Samuel, the retiring Social Development Officer, about how the terms "subsistence", "peasant" and "commercial" translated into CiBemba (for the benefit of those without secondary education and little knowledge of English). Samuel said there were no special terms, only variants on the generic balimi (lit. cultivators). He glossed commercial farmers as balimi ubukwata mabala ayakalamba (lit. cultivators having big fields/farms) and peasant farmers as ifilimi (the prefix ici/ifi denotes importance, largeness, etc.). There was no distinct term for "subsistence" or "traditional" farmers: in Samuel's words "They are not farmers, just villagers (mwikala mushi)."

This speech led one man to ask "If I am growing one hectare of maize, but also all my food crops, should I not then be called "subsistence"<sup>24</sup>. And what about someone else growing as much maize but no food crops?" Samuel answered authoritatively that the extent of maize farming was the decisive factor, so both individuals should call themselves ifilimi<sup>25</sup>.

#### A new professionalism?

These particular forms of qualification can be seen as part of a wider process of social differentiation. Those people, mostly young,

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<sup>24</sup> He used the English term.

<sup>25</sup> Young educated maize growers will sometimes use the English term "peasant" to distinguish themselves from the ranks of the "ignorant", but amongst the most educated the term is often used in a derogatory fashion, as it can be in Britain.

who have been educated into maize growing through school or extension, can be seen to identify themselves with government workers in a social sense; they will spend their time in such circles for beer drinking, and tend to restrict this activity to evenings and weekends. They make a clear distinction between work and leisure, and have come to talk of maize farming as a job, business, or occupation. Thus, respondents to a questionnaire on cooperatives membership gave "farmer" for occupation if involved with maize, or left the space blank otherwise (excepting those with some other official qualification, such as teachers). Since they work on food crop fields in the mornings and maize in the afternoons, they are occupied in agriculture for a greater part of the day, and tend to keep the equivalent of the "office hours" of the government staff. They also, literally, advertise the virtues of maize farming by adorning their houses with pictures and inscriptions rhetorically promoting it. On one house I saw pictures of an axe (isembe), a hoe (ulukasu) and a maize cob (itaba) with the slogan "Lima emaka ya mwikala chalo" (farming is the strength of the rural people)<sup>26</sup>.

Maize farming is part of a pattern of urban-oriented living, where competence is tied to graduating from an educational process. What is significant about maize farming for Mabumba is that it brings the possibility of this urban, governmental status out to the village, rather than villagers having to go to town. So even those with little or no formal education can become part of the educated elite via extension.

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<sup>26</sup> Mwikala chalo suggests both rural people and the people of Zambia more generally.

The process of change is not affecting everyone equally, though. I have focused my attention here on the most educated group of maize farmers and their relatively unequivocal identity with productionist aims. There are many others, as we shall see in chapter 8, for whom there is an ambiguous approach to fulfilling productionist and distributionist demands. And part of the ambiguity stems from a wish to avoid too close scrutiny by government agents (hence fear among some of the role of contact farmers). This is particularly so among older people who remember the harsh sanctions which used to be applied by the colonial government to those who did not conform to state expectations.

The focus of education on youth is also a source of tension. For young people it is a means to assert themselves against their elders in a way that did not used to be possible. At one extension meeting a young man was able to overturn the selection of two senior men as contact farmers by shouting "Ni nolufyengo. Ni tribalism" (It's unjust, it's tribalism)<sup>27</sup>. Understandably, some elders resent the new status their juniors can obtain independently through maize farming, and I witnessed several half-serious fights between senior and junior men where the junior had insulted the senior's farming abilities.

These ambiguities in the relations between villagers and the state are developed more fully in later chapters. I shall close here by presenting some evidence that the set of production values attaching to cash maize is beginning to be mapped onto other areas of

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<sup>27</sup> This man was using tribalism in an odd sense to mean the precedence of age as traditionally practised.

production. Several times I came across Lima farmers being asked to come with their ropes and demarcate other people's cassava fields (an unprecedented occurrence before 1987). These people had been asked by Fundisha what areas they had under cassava for his cropping forecast, and could think only to ask someone with knowledge of such matters to come and help. On the basis of these new measurements, I came across two men trying to compare their household cassava production quantitatively (number of baskets of dried tubers prepared by their wives from one lima areas). As I argue in the next chapter, the spread of productionist influence depends on this process, as food production is simultaneously quantified by producers and made more available to the interventions of productionist institutions by virtue of that quantification.

## Chapter 7: Extension, part two.

This chapter is a continuation of the preceding one, but with the focus shifted to a different analytical level: the extension staff as a collectivity (with some comparative back reference to the position of Fundisha) in their relations with higher administrative levels, and the theoretical agenda which informs the ways these field staff are trained.

The exploration of productionism is continued by reference to the kinds of data that the administration perceive relevant to the monitoring of extension work, and the kinds of methodology that they try to apply in making extension effective.

To continue from where chapter 6 ended, I begin with a consideration of the T&V system as seen from the provincial level, in terms of why it was perceived not to be working, and how field staff were trained as a result.

### The T&V system as seen at provincial level.

Instrumental in the development of extension work in Luapula province was the Extension Training Officer, Mr. Kauseni. In his enthusiasm to make improvements, he reflected Fundisha's attitude in the field (and, like him, this was not unconnected with professional ambitions). He was exceptional among provincial staff in having a postgraduate degree in extension from a European university, and thus a strong grounding in the theories and methods current to the world of extension.

Shortly after my arrival Kauseni had administered a questionnaire to

field staff in Mansa district to try to identify some of the problems with T&V. It is worth dwelling on briefly as it is indicative of the kinds of information that extension administrators see relevant to the description of "rural society", and for training field staff.

### The questionnaire

To confirm a hypothesis, that only a very small proportion of rural people had contact with, and thus benefitted from, extension work<sup>1</sup>, the ETO had analysed some demographic information from camp reports. He had two observations to make. First, that of a district population in excess of 100,000 only 5,000 were recorded by camp staff as being farmers, leaving some 80 per cent of able bodied adults unaccounted for<sup>2</sup>. Secondly, where contact farmers had been appointed, some 95 per cent were men. These two pieces of information were taken as urgent indicators of a need to diagnose what was "wrong" (the questionnaire), and to respond with new training material.

The questionnaire was divided into quantitative and qualitative

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<sup>1</sup> It is not untypical of institutions to appreciate what happens in their sphere of influence only in terms of their conscious intervention. Thus the effects of extension are only understood as direct results of what extension staff do, not allowing for the possibility of mediated effects through, for example, kin networks.

<sup>2</sup> The ETO felt that the population counted as farmers were those people growing cash maize, a reasonable assumption in view of the evidence in this and the preceding chapter. Of course, the reliability of the data might be questioned: who gets included in the category farmer depends on the personal contacts of field staff and records such as applications for input loans. People who obtain information, and perhaps inputs, through kin, friends or other sources, would likely be invisible to the camp staff. It is probable, therefore, that the number of farmers was underestimated.

aspects. With the master metaphor for extension being sender-message-receiver, the number of contacts made assumes great importance: the ETO's first questions concerned how often the contact farmers were visited, or themselves came to see the camp officers; how many farmers attended meetings held at contact farms; how many non-contact farmers were visited in a given interval; and what was the mean distance of contact farmers from camp headquarters, etc. In other words, this section of the questionnaire posited extension as a quantifiable entity; and the results could be compared with the ideal coverage predicted by the originating extension theorists. The rest of the questionnaire aimed to assess more subjectively why ideal coverage might not be achieved<sup>3</sup>.

#### Questionnaire responses.

On problems with T&V, staff tended to emphasise logistics and personal working conditions. Camp size, number of farmers and lack of services were named as the major problems. In contrast, diversity of the farming system was not thought problematic, nor the selection and response of contact farmers. The content of technical recommendations was felt appropriate to local conditions, and thus not a problem. Related to this, staff listed their sources of advice solely in terms of their training, and literature produced by the Department of Agriculture. None of them said they had learned from

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<sup>3</sup> Respondents were given pre-determined options in many of the questions, which they had to list as being of major, minor, or no significance in their camps. Of course, such an approach limited the possibilities of answers, and the ranking of factors may be an artificial imposition, but the questions were based on previous experience with field staff, so some insight can be gained into how field staff perceived their conditions.

local farmers (but cf. ch. 6).

When asked how they evaluated their degree of influence over villagers, staff saw themselves as transcending culture, but subordinate to the availability of credit and markets for products. They saw the content of what they were to communicate as self-evidently superior to "village agricultural methods", a position easily adopted in relation to the maize package since it was truly exotic to many villagers' experience.

On the question of whether farmers followed extension advice, the response was cooler. Commonly, farmers were said not to follow advice because of "lack of education and deafness" and "natural stubbornness". The final question was whether extension officers saw themselves as leaders or teachers, and why. Among the majority who thought of themselves as teachers, one man said he was such:

"Because I offer knowledge to farmers. I give technical advice, and teach modern ways to farmers. I import knowledge which farmers are lacking, especially small farmers. I am a technical man with the knowledge to stamp out ignorance".

These latter answers give some clues as to the reasons behind the overall shape of the questionnaire results. I would argue that as pupils of a productionist education system, extension staff take on certain biases in perceptions of themselves, their work, and the targets of their work. As with Fundisha in the previous chapter, their aggregated opinions suggest a self-perception as heralds of a new age, introducing new, better, more rational methods of farming. They believed in the rightness of what they were taught to do; so they didn't complain in the questionnaire of any inadequacy in the content of their training, least of all in the content of extension recommendations. Likewise, non-technical factors such as their



relationships with the contact farmers were little emphasised; they believed in the theory, even if practice did not stand up to scrutiny (Fundisha enthused to me about contact methodology, even in the light of what little happened in Mabumba in 1987-88). Where lack of community response was noted, it was ascribed to "primitiveness" and "tradition", tradition being defined in antithesis to the outlook of the extension worker. Where extensioners did detect failure in their work, it was attributed to non-human arenas; the difficulty of covering large areas with poor transport, and not having the necessary credit and marketing infrastructure to support the enterprises which extension was promoting<sup>4</sup>.

So, on the basis of these questionnaire responses, what kind of action did the ETO take?

#### Problem identification.

The responses to the questionnaires were assimilated by the ETO and used as the basis for a training workshop aimed at conscientising the field staff about where problems lay in extension, and how to overcome them. Drawing on his own training in extension theory, Kauseni focused his discourse on the relevance and transmission of specific extension messages for certain groups of people. He began by quizzing staff on what they perceived to be the characteristics of the institutionally defined groups of farmers: Commercial, Emergent, Peasant, and Traditional.

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<sup>4</sup> Of course such factors do affect extension, but the point to be made is that inadequacy is seen primarily, if not exclusively, in logistical, resource availability, terms.

First definitions were given in terms of the areas of cash crops grown (for example, that commercial farmers grew upwards of twenty hectares<sup>5</sup>); then in terms of personal characteristics. Peasant farmers were said to have limited capital but an interest in getting advice from extension staff. Traditional farmers, in contrast, were laggards, averse to change, and only interested in growing subsistence crops. They used mixed cropping systems with scattered plots, and often planted their crops at incorrect spacings. They were slow to learn, often illiterate, oriented to tradition and frequently lived in isolated areas. Indeed, all characteristics attributed to traditional farmers were the inverse of those of all the other groups, and all negative in relation to them.

Kauseni did not berate these attitudes; indeed they were a mixture of information that extension staff received during training, and observation of farmers made by staff in the field. Rather, he was to use the information to make a point about the appropriateness of extension messages.

Staff were next asked about problems they were facing in the field at this time of year (December). The older and more experienced farmers were not looking after demonstrations well, often feeling that the plots were too small and that they already knew about what was being demonstrated. In one camp where people were new to maize farming they were planting with too little fertilizer, and in a demonstration aimed at the small-scale (peasant) farmer, the participants had failed to collect lime because they did not know how to use it. A

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<sup>5</sup> Farmer definitions by crop area are given in Appendix 3.

general problem was that peasant farmers did not follow rotations correctly: after some time they would shift their fields altogether ("they are too used to citemene", as one AA said).

Kauseni compared these observations with those on the characteristics of different kinds of farmers to ask: is there not a problem of a mismatch between kinds of demonstration and the kind of farmer chosen to participate? Most of those present concurred. He concluded the first day of the workshop by stating that different extension messages were needed for different farmers, and this applied both to demonstrations and the operation of the contact farmer system (and he wanted to remove the typological distinction between contact and demonstration, as the two roles should be at least partly interchangeable). On the basis of the camp records of the farming population, he indicated as a high priority the production and dissemination of messages for the invisible majority of traditional farmers, those whom the field staff were most negative about and found hardest to work with. Training would be forthcoming on how to reach this group, premised mainly on selecting contact farmers who themselves were members of the various identified target groups.

The ETO's central concern, reflecting that more generally found now in extension theory, is that extension is about delivering "the right message." Within the rhetoric of "messages" and "targetting", relations are imputed between certain kinds of message, and certain groups of people, the criteria used for defining groups usually being some quantitative indicator, most usually agricultural production levels. As we have seen, in practice subjective labels become attached to these groups by field extensioners. But the ETO was not

interested in this process of subjective labelling. He suspected that field staff made deliberately biased choices of contact farmers<sup>6</sup>, but thought the bias stemmed from lack of appropriate extension messages for subsistence villagers, i.e. an inadequacy in the content of professional intercourse between staff and villagers, divorced from any social or political context.

An alternative thesis which I am putting forward is that the events surrounding extension in Mabumba in 1987-88 can better be understood as happening at a particular confluence of historically determined social conditions, where one can identify the interplay of productionist and distributionist perspectives in relations between state institutions and villagers. The rest of this chapter will consider the social context which is missed by extension theory and practice. But first, the question of why it is missed is taken further by examining the kinds of data which inform the productionist perspective of extension.

#### Production data

One of the regular tasks of extension field staff is the collection of production data for their particular agricultural camps. Such data are used to assess whether governmental objectives are being achieved, from national food production levels down to whether a particular extension message is being "adopted" in a district. They are the determining criteria on which the extension service measures its performance. What are these data?

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<sup>6</sup> As we have seen in chapter 6, bias occurred even in spite of Fundisha's rhetorical attempts to prevent it.

The different categories of farmers have already been mentioned. On an annual basis the numbers in each category are taken to indicate the influence of extension on the number of farmers participating in the national economy, and contributing, eventually, to national food security. The major data collated at block level are the crop production figures, expressed as numbers of participating farmers, areas under the crops, forecast yields and actual crop sales. Again, annual trends are interpreted to indicate whether long-term production targets, decided at national level, are being achieved. The ways these data are generated, and how they vary for different crops are informative.

In the block officer's records for Mansa East (including Mabumba) each table of figures was prefaced with some comment about the aims of extension in relation to the particular crop. These all amounted to saying that production should be increased to make the producer self-sufficient and allow the sale of some surplus to the provincial cooperative union, thereby helping to feed the nation. The table for maize showed consistent increases in the number of farmers between 1981 and 1987 (a sevenfold rise from 288 to 2028), with a concomitant increase in hectarage and sales to LCU. For each year the estimated and actual sales were within fifteen to twenty-five percent of one another. Furthermore, yields per hectare rose slightly over the same period, with little apparent fluctuation.

The accuracy of these figures for maize is not unquestionable<sup>7</sup>, but what is of interest is the striking lack of consistency in the tables for all other crops<sup>8</sup>. The numbers of farmers, areas and estimated yields all fluctuated erratically, such that they could only be considered inaccurate. For groundnuts, beans and cassava there were no figures recorded for actual yields, because these crops were not sold to the cooperative union. Finger millet, a crop still grown largely on fitemene was completely unrecorded because it was stored unthreshed, so lima recommendations could not be related to the crop as stored in the village.

The difference between maize and other crop data indicates an important point about the machinery of productionism. To be visible at all to productionist methods, a crop must be measurable. It follows from this premise that measurability is a precondition to falling within the sphere of institutional influence. Thus, very confident statements were made about maize and the performance of

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<sup>7</sup> When discussing how crop forecasts were made, Fundisha said that if possible a farmer's land area under a particular crop would be measured (this would already be known for a maize farmer in receipt of loans), and the yield predicted by working back from the yields expected if Lima recommendations were followed, i.e. the yield was assumed rather than measured, and did not take into account the likely effects of variations in environmental conditions or management practices. Fundisha seemed to believe that if his teaching was being followed, those were the yields people would get. He did not recognise that his method for estimating yields was, in a sense, cheating. He believed in the validity of extension teaching documents.

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix 3.

extension in increasing its production levels<sup>9</sup>. At the other extreme, finger millet was regarded by extension as a "problem" crop. The District Agricultural Officer informed me that it was the third most important crop in his area: most people grew it, and it was culturally very important as the main ingredient of beer. Yet he had no production figures (for the reason given above), and no sales figures because no villager sold it to the state marketing institutions, which meant he could not assess how well or badly it was grown, or whether production was adequate to people's needs<sup>10</sup>. Efforts were being made though toward overcoming the problem, which focused on devising ways of making village storage levels measurable. In 1987 ARPT suggested comparison of threshed and unthreshed samples of grain to identify a universal conversion factor; thereafter grain weights could be arrived at approximately from the weight, or (less accurately) the volume, of stored, unthreshed finger millet.

There is, then, a tendency for the productionist institutions to seek new ways of making things quantifiable, as a prerequisite for assessing their own influence. As we saw in the previous chapter, this tendency is beginning to be inculcated in the subjects of institutional intervention; some villagers in Mabumba were starting to demarcate their cassava fields. However, not all crops are

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<sup>9</sup> I am fully in agreement with Hedlund when he states that one element in the administration's interest in hybrid maize is that "A possible increase in the sale of maize was easy to verify and brought considerable prestige to all levels of the administration" (1984, p.237).

<sup>10</sup> The fact that finger millet is grown mainly on citemene is significant. Extension staff generally do not visit citemene fields, both because of their remoteness and because they are educated to think of shifting cultivation as primitive and wasteful of natural resources.

equally susceptible to quantification. Both extension and research staff bemoaned the fact that cassava was the provincial staple, yet it was virtually impossible to collect useful statistics as a basis for agronomic research and recommendations. Why so? Because, even if the land area under cassava was measured, it simply does not fit the model of a crop familiar to agronomists. It is a perennial from which small harvests are taken progressively over a period of two years or more. Furthermore, it has a fairly high but variable water content. In contrast, agronomists are used to taking a single harvest from an annual crop and assessing yield at a controlled moisture content. In summary, cassava is fairly intractable when it comes to measurement, and this continues to be a major stumbling block to its becoming a researchable product for the productionist institutions.

What I have described so far are general exercises in data collection which all AAs contribute to as the basis for block officers' annual reports. There are also more specific kinds of data, relating to special farmer training schemes. These are interesting in that they are used to justify spending by external funding agencies: monitoring and evaluation are seen as essential components of the schemes.

#### The Lima schemes

The Lima schemes in Zambia originated as a response to the national concern for food security and alleviation of rural poverty. The technical package, designed originally in the 1970s (Mc Phillips, MAWD, e.g. 1984), was to consist of a set of recommended practices for a variety of crops, expressed in as simple a form as



possible (cups and ropes for measurement, for example), and for a unit of land suitable for a starting farmer, denoted one "lima"<sup>11</sup>. The term lima was chosen for two reasons; first, that ukulima is the indigenous term (in CiBemba and certain other major Zambian languages) for cultivation; and secondly that it could be an acronym for "Learned Improved Methods of Agriculture".<sup>12</sup>

By the mid-1980s the Lima package had been taken up by various donor aided schemes in the provinces. In Luapula, SIDA<sup>13</sup> was providing on-farm demonstrations of how crops would grow if the Lima recommendations were followed, and employing field days at the demonstration sites as a means of teaching farmers. They were also running a fairly limited scheme called "Lima ladder", in the first year of which a farmer would be given limited inputs to grow one lima of a crop (in practice this was nearly always maize), and on the basis of that year's performance be aided to grow a progressively larger area under higher management levels (meaning more intensive use of inputs supplied on credit, improved weeding practices and so forth). The theory was that a person could climb up the production ladder through incremental knowledge, rather than being introduced directly to highly capitalised production, with all its attendant risks (this latter was thought to have been a problem with earlier efforts to encourage maize production).

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<sup>11</sup> 0.25 hectare.

<sup>12</sup> This is an interesting instance of productionism taking over indigenous terms and making changes to their meaning. Slippage tends to occur between the different senses, so that "to cultivate" is becoming more specifically associated with growing maize.

<sup>13</sup> Swedish International Development Authority.

Finnida<sup>14</sup> had become involved with Lima in a rather different sense. Their Agricultural Extension and Training Programme (AETP) was aimed (at least until 1988) at selecting individuals for training in Lima techniques at Mansa Farm Institute, who would later effectively become part of T&V extension for their villages.

During field-work I attended various staff meetings concerning the Lima schemes and had access to an evaluation report of Finnida Lima. What follows is a description of how data were used to assess the performance of the projects, and how priorities were changing in the operation of the schemes.

#### Finnida Lima.

The stated aim of the Finnida programme was to contribute to promoting sustainability of the national economy through the small-farmer sector, with emphasis on education, rather than structural price incentives (the latter being regarded as a matter for national level agricultural policy, rather than local intervention). The primary measure of achievement would be levels of crop production in relation to the number of farmers coming in contact with Lima training, directly or otherwise. The evaluation report of 1987 drew on a questionnaire administered to a stratified sample of Lima-trained and non Lima-trained people, relating these findings to gross changes in agricultural output for the province as compared with those for Lima farmers as a group. The status quo for 1987 was discussed in relation to the overall project aims, drawing on some extension theory to assess the level of success so far.

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<sup>14</sup> Finnish International Development Agency.

To 1987, the Finnida scheme had trained 2,445 farmers in four districts of the province, representing about 1/31 of the total target group population. The major constraint on the numbers that could be trained was the level of funds available to provide free inputs.

In principle, training had been available on the growing of a number of crops: maize, rice, sunflower, groundnuts, beans, sorghum and millets. In practice, most trainees had opted for maize (for example, in Mansa district in 1986, of 150 trainees, 147 chose maize; the other three beans, rice and groundnuts, respectively).

Overall maize production levels in the province had increased rapidly since the programme began in 1980, and the average yields of Lima trained farmers exceeded the provincial average by one tonne per hectare (almost three tonnes per hectare compared with just over two). In these productionist terms the programme was seen as being successful:

"The analysis of field survey data shows that AETP/FINNIDA has been able to exert economic and social impacts in the four districts surveyed". (Böckelman & Negassa, p.3).

What is meant, though, by social impacts? These were inferred from answers to certain questions about households, which I reproduce below:

1. How many children do you have?
2. Do you know of any of your neighbours, etc., benefitting from the lima concept to the extent that they can buy books, school uniforms etc. for their children?
3. How many of your children go to school?
4. Have any of them started after you joined the lima programme?
5. Do most of the children (0-6 years) grow normally in your village/neighbouring villages?
6. Do you feel that there are any nutritional problems in your village/neighbouring villages?
7. Are you a member of a primary cooperative society? (ibid).

By making comparisons between the Lima farmers and others, certain quite conjectural positive conclusions were drawn about the likely long-term social benefits of the scheme. On the premise that a healthy and educated future generation would provide the necessary "genetic potential for future productivity" (ibid.), levels of school attendance and nutrition were considered as if they might be results of education in improved farming, and the precursors of future developments. There was a circularity of argument here, resting on the assumption that improved wealth would lead people to invest in their social future through education of their children; and the survey results appeared to support this view. However, on the basis of other studies in Mabumba, and elsewhere in Zambia, this kind of assumption seems dubious. A rural sociologist working for ARPT had noted in Mabumba a tendency for families with school age children who were just entering maize production to take their children out of school to contribute to the extra field work necessitated by maize, rather than divert scarce cash to piece work labour (Sikana, personal communication). And in Northern Province several studies (e.g. Sharpe, 1987, *passim*; Moore and Vaughan, 1987, p.540) suggested that under some circumstances entry into cash maize production could worsen child nutrition problems.

Aside from the difficulty of interpreting answers to the kinds of questions that were asked (related to different perceptions of what the schemes were about; see later), the whole thrust of the survey assumed an interest in productive investment in the way that would be expected in a Western society. As we have seen in earlier chapters on the social organisation of production and distribution in Mabumba, the idea of productive investment remains a relatively new one in

Mansa district, and one in tension with the distributionist tendencies of a political economy which still operates in some senses a matrilineal ideology (see also ch. 8).

So, the evaluation team saw the Finnnida scheme as having positive economic and social effects, premised on rising production levels. Having reached about 1/31 of the chosen target group, the future aim was to reduce this ratio to 1/13. According to theorists of T&V extension, if this proportion of the target population has direct contact with extension, then, assuming the presence of "bridging agents" (the contact farmers) all the target population should benefit through a process of diffusion of knowledge<sup>15</sup>. In which areas, if any, were there perceived to be limitations in the scheme, in terms of the numbers of people being reached and the kinds of information communicated?

The technical content of the extension messages had in this instance been raised as an issue by extension staff, especially relating to demonstrations on differential fertiliser application and the economic interpretation of the results. Benefits had been expressed as the value of the yield increases (gross returns per hectare less the fertiliser cost) or as a value/cost ratio (the monetary return per hectare per unit cost of fertiliser). The extension staff complained that they could not translate these measures into terms intelligible to the farmer, and they themselves often had trouble grasping the concepts. Finnnida conceded the problem, as one of level of technical complexity of information, and were prepared to look at

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<sup>15</sup>

This is a strongly productionist view of knowledge, as something which spreads in a way analogous to a crystal dissolving in water.

simplifications for teaching purposes, such as expressing yield advantages in terms of number of bags of maize harvested from each (identical size) plot.

Such technical problems (level of complexity) are quite easily graspable from a productionist viewpoint. Various diffident comments in the evaluation report indicate other sources of problems which are less accessible to a productionist perception, and which are largely to do with its relatively poor ability to describe and interpret social context.

With reference to farmers dropping out of the lima schemes:

"No study is available on factors that lead to dropping out, and some of these could be unrelated to message delivery and the lima package". (op. cit. p.29).

On farmers modifying what they are taught:

"Farmers accept packages pragmatically, not normatively, and devise possible modifications that can be tailored to their own needs. This is in a way a contribution to adaptive research, and can be compared with the results of researchers in that field". (op. cit. p.38).

On likely sources of variation in yields achieved:

"Apparently, the lima project seems to have different physical impacts in the different districts. But there are no substantial differences among the extension blocks in the four districts when adoption rates are considered. Therefore, the causes of differences in yield cannot be completely related to the message delivery of the extension system, but rather with problems of soil fertility and input delivery systems." (op. cit. p.33, emphasis added).

Notice that only physical environmental factors are adduced as alternative explanations for variations in yields.

And finally:

"Of course the use of services of the project can be measured but the level of acceptance and credibility of the whole package seen through the eyes of the farmers is much more difficult to find out". (op. cit. p.14).

Note even here that acceptability is thought of in quantitative terms (levels of acceptance).

These sorts of questions were left largely unexamined, but in a sense some of the imponderables led, in 1987, to changes in Finnida policy which contradicted earlier stated aims.

It was a longer term aim of Lima schemes, in line with central government policy, to bring about self-sufficient increases in agricultural production. This would mean the phasing out of the system of free input delivery to trainee farmers, to be replaced by a loans system, in line with conditions for other small-scale cash croppers. A second stimulus to make such a change was that donor funded projects were under an obligation to show that the schemes, as part of the T&V extension system, were relatively cost effective. To 1987, Finnida had been criticised by other institutions for training few individuals at relatively high cost (through the provision of free inputs for at least three years after training, and free accommodation to trainees at Mansa Farm Institute during initial training).

The response to these pressures, as from the 1988-89 season, would be to have the training done in the field by field staff, thereby reaching more farmers more quickly and cheaply at the same time as replacing free inputs with loans.

Where a contradiction with earlier policy was to happen was in the area of the method of allocating loans. Other loan organisations, especially the new Lima Bank, were experiencing considerable problems with defaulting on repayments. The kinds of reasons posited for this

defaulting included late distribution of local purchase orders, late delivery of inputs, unfavourable climatic conditions, and failure to understand credit systems. Finnida wanted to ensure a fairly high rate of loan retrieval, and for this reason field staff were instructed to choose credit worthy people to be trainee Lima farmers "people who will not give you trouble". One suggestion was that teachers and other government staff should be chosen. This change in emphasis ran counter to the original statement of intent of Finnida and Sida, which was to train young and enthusiastic people in farming, who had no previous experience of cash cropping. The nature of the target group had been changed to help improve the cost effectiveness of the extension delivery system, whilst retaining the methodological illusion that the exemplary role of the chosen targets would lead to all sections of the population being reached.

#### The missing social context

What this change in Finnida policy represents is a tacit recognition of social realities; choosing to work with those already operating from a productionist perspective. In the second part of this chapter I aim to bring together the various observations I have been making on extension to specify more closely the characteristics of a productionist discourse, and how the interaction of productionist institutions with the village involves various hidden agendas, to do ultimately with different understandings of what extension exists for (and these understandings themselves can be seen as the effects of productionist and distributionist perspectives).

We have already seen that productionism tends to be blind to social context. Before looking at why this should be so, one further area



of description will help to support the argument; that being the relations between field staff, their superiors and their working conditions (cf. Hedlund, 1984 pp. 233-238). As we shall see, these relations are significant to the performance of extension staff.

In the previous chapter I discussed one particular extension field worker who had a positive attitude to work, stating that his age and ambitions (he would need a good reference to get into NRDC) were significant components of his apparent enthusiasm. The general picture of field staff (and others in administratively higher positions) in Luapula province was much more negative, as revealed in discussion with them during training seminars.

Chief among staff complaints was that they were not given due credit for their work. They carried a heavy burden, one worsened when any new scheme (such as the Lima programmes) was introduced. As importantly, they saw their superiors as taking most of the credit when things did work well.

The second area of complaint was the lack of possibilities for advancement enforced by a rigid bureaucratic structure. Both these areas of complaints could be seen to be operating at various levels in the hierarchy, up to the Provincial Agricultural Officer. I will consider each level separately, beginning with the field staff.

#### Field staff

Two older AAs that I met had a particularly jaded view of their work. They came originally from Eastern province (an area of Zambia much more involved in cash cropping than Luapula, and where maize was the staple crop) which probably added to their disappointment with local

conditions. They had found from the outset that the people were not interested in working hard at farming<sup>16</sup>, and rather than earning lump sums of money and investing them, were content to raise small amounts of cash which would be used almost immediately.

They felt their pay was derisory in relation to their responsibilities, and even such benefits as bicycle allowances were being cut because the provincial officials had directed funds elsewhere (in this instance for a legitimate purpose). They could not be militant about pay and conditions because they were civil servants. One of them had received no promotion for twenty years, and this was because promotion within the civil service depended on paper qualifications, not merit.

As for their administrative seniors, they considered them to be elitist, and not concerned with the problems they faced in the field, such as taking the brunt of blame from villagers when inputs were late in arriving:

"They just like to sit in their offices in town, wearing a suit and a tie".

Given these perceptions, the two men were quite cynical about extension ever managing to achieve much. They were thinking of retiring and running their own farms. Other colleagues they knew were considering resigning and trying to make careers for themselves in business. By now they admitted they were spending most of their time growing their own maize. Their poor working conditions and the "primitive" attitude of the local people were enough to make them

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It should be noted that these two men were posted in Nchelenge district which was much more heavily oriented to fishing than farming as the major economic activity, in comparison with Mansa district.

feel their time would be better spent serving their own interests.

"Even all these projects brought by donors will have no effect unless us men in the bush are given some motivation. All they have meant so far to us is extra work, collecting data and carrying out demonstrations"<sup>17</sup>.

As strangers in the province, they may have had an excessively negative attitude, but there was much other evidence of apathy and antipathy between field staff and their superiors<sup>18</sup>.

There was a general feeling among juniors of being the front line of extension work, yet when they were described as such by superiors, they felt they were only really being paid lip service. For example, many AAs saw themselves as having quite intimate knowledge of the conditions in their camps and what should count as development priorities. Yet, when it came to deciding the content of farmer training courses or crop demonstrations, these were dictated by the Training Officers at Farmer Training Centres and DAOs, respectively. Fundisha had been frustrated in the case of demonstrations for 1987-88. He was asked to find demonstrator farmers to grow rice which he knew would fail as rice production in Mabumba had virtually ceased after the government had stopped offering free inputs. At the same time he was asked to start a rotation trial that was only guaranteed to last for one season. He knew from his training that a one year rotation was a contradiction in terms. These kinds of requests from the district were tending to undermine his view of the competence of

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<sup>17</sup> One of the two had been involved with SIDA lima demonstrations.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Pottier, 1988, p. 94.

his superiors; yet he was not in any position to argue with them<sup>19</sup>.

The one-way flow of decision making occasionally had even worse consequences from the field staff point of view. Following the outbreak of cassava mealy bug in the mid 1980s the emergency response of the province had been to tell field staff to prevent the use and movement of infected cuttings. Fundisha told me such an instruction would be impossible to enforce as people depended on planting new cassava each year, and any attempt to coerce them would make him unpopular (notably with the chief) and ultimately render his job impossible. The district and provincial staff did not recognise such problems, he said, as they spent so little time in contact with villagers themselves.

Where instances such as this occurred field-staff felt doubly resentful that the blame for problems was always pushed back onto them; their superiors somehow managed to slip out of being held accountable. One exchange in a training workshop illustrates the point:

Statement by an AA:

"We don't yet have the producer prices for the forthcoming season, so farmers are annoyed".

Reply from the DAO:

"Some staff have been sent lists of the prices. Others could have obtained them at the last staff meeting, or from the

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<sup>19</sup>

I must here refer back to an earlier statement; that in a questionnaire on T&V field staff made no complaints about the technical content of extension messages. In view of what I am saying here, such apparent agreement has to be seen in terms of a division of perception between maize cash cropping (information generally deemed valid by extension staff) and other crops (about which staff feel much more equivocal); and, as importantly, their perceived lack of power to influence the thinking and decisions of their superiors.

district offices. Those of you who don't know them are not showing enough initiative. You should have at least referred the problem to your block officer, who would have consulted me".

At the same meeting the ETO presented a draft of a new weekly and monthly reporting format to be commented on by field staff. Its aim was improved monitoring of field staff activity as a contribution to improving the working of the T&V system. It required lots of numbers: how many and which kinds of farmers contacted at what intervals, and the amount of time spent in contact with them and travelling to and from camp headquarters, etc. (more productionist data). The main comments the field staff made were that it would mean too much work (the draft suggested daily, weekly and monthly reporting) and that they could only be expected to adjust to such a system if they were provided with watches (to measure the time spent travelling and with farmers) and plenty of stationery<sup>20</sup>. On the basis of past experience with the province, the field staff were quite cynical about the purpose of this particular consultation. One even asked the ETO "Why are you asking us about this? If the Ministry in Lusaka wants it you will implement it anyway". To which the ETO angrily replied "That is not the case. I wouldn't waste my time standing here in front of you." Several of those present later confided they weren't convinced, given the precedent of rigid centralised decisions.

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Up to 1988 AAs were expected to provide one report each month on their camps which would describe local conditions and their activities over the past four weeks. The draft proposal required much more precise information over a wider range of topics.

### The District Agricultural Officer

The DAO had a similarly negative view of relations with both his juniors and superiors, and for parallel reasons.

Mr. Kalulu had been appointed as Mansa district DAO eight months before our interview. Previously he had been a land use planner (with the rank Senior Agricultural Supervisor) in Kawambwa district. The post of DAO, being ungazetted, brought extra responsibilities, but no extra pay. It meant that he had to spend a lot of time on paper work, which kept him from visiting the field and monitoring field staff work. In the knowledge that they wouldn't be closely watched, the field staff, from his point of view were lazy about their work, especially the monthly reports, while he got blamed by the PAO when these were late. He also had to spend time attending meetings irrelevant to his work in agriculture, but he had no choice in the matter as he was called to attend by "politicians". As to whether he would continue as DAO he said that would depend on the PAO's assessment of his performance. He didn't know what the PAO's opinion of him was because contact was limited to him handing over reports and data as and when they were required by the province, and in return being given directives to follow. He would just as gladly return to his old job, but for political reasons being DAO as long as he was required was not something he could question.

Kalulu's main complaint was that he was not given the necessary power effectively to do the things that were expected of the DAO position. As with the field staff, he saw this as to do with the bureaucratic system. If he had some direct power over junior staff he might be able to ensure that monthly reports were available to the province on

time. His junior staff were lazy because they knew it was virtually impossible to be sacked, and any form of disciplinary action within the civil service required a convoluted administrative procedure which depended in the first place on the support of the PAO, which Kalulu felt was lacking. And the reason for the lack of support, he thought, was that when things didn't work the PAO needed a scapegoat, the DAOs being structurally the easiest choice.

Lack of effectiveness stemming from lack of power also influenced lateral relations with institutions outside the Department of Agriculture. Kalulu was supposed to act as go-between from the field staff to the input and marketing organisations, for which he had a rank counterpart within LCU. In practice, LCU staff showed little enthusiasm for contact with him, and, he said, had even lied to him, for example, about the number of maize bags available at the various depots in the district. His lack of influence with LCU in response to problems brought from the field led junior staff, and ultimately the farmers, to lose confidence in his authority and abilities, in his perception.

As to possible improvements in his position, Kalulu suggested the provision of more motor vehicles for the use of district staff, which would allow him to make more surprise visits on staff in the field.

#### The Provincial Agricultural Officer

Although the next in the chain of command above the DAOs, the PAO occupies a vastly superior position, the post being a professional one, and appointment not independent of political favour.

As a reasonably highly placed civil servant, a chief function of a PAO is to ensure that central policy decisions in agricultural planning are adhered to at provincial level. My observation, which tends to support the DAO's opinion, was that the position the PAO adopted vis à vis this role effectively made him immune from accountability to those below him, and thus from accusations of responsibility for any of the province's perceived agricultural problems.

In action, the PAO was most often found giving opening remarks or a keynote speech at various meetings and seminars (for extension, ARPT and so forth). His style of presentation was very much that of an official rhetorician. "You must encourage the growing of the major food crops, because hungry people are angry people. You must include more women in training schemes because the Government realize that women are very important contributors to national development. The Government is doing its best, but in these times of austerity, as outlined in the Interim Economic Development Plan<sup>21</sup>, everyone must pull together to use resources efficiently. No further abuse of public funds will be tolerated. You should always speak well of the province; the Department of Agriculture in particular, or donor agencies may lose confidence in us and terminate funding."

Always, the rhetorical style precluded the possibility of dissent, and established that decision making was very much a one way process,

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This document was drawn up for implementation during the time of my field work. It's production had been necessitated by the rejection of IMF loan conditionality by the Zambian Government, and because the details of the Fourth National Development Plan had not yet been finalised.



from central government as far as the PAO: all statements were couched in terms of the common good, following principles that seemed unarguable<sup>22</sup>. Attempts at argument usually failed: at one meeting with ARPT he wished to veto the proposal for research on agroforestry, as it did not address short term policy priorities to increase food production levels. ARPT staff tried to argue that agroforestry was an important possible contribution to improving food production sustainably (by conserving soil), but the PAO remained adamant that such research did not answer directly the issues of major national importance<sup>23</sup>. When, however, his own introductory comments led to discussions involving differences of opinion, he would not intervene, but rather summarize and parenthesize so that his original statement appeared to be the correct one. To illustrate the point: at one training meeting after he had directed extension staff to choose more women for training courses, an argument developed over which kinds of women should be selected. On one side were those, who with Sida extension theorists believed that it was most appropriate to select only women heading households, as they were commonly perceived as Zambian societies' most underprivileged group, and because in conjugal households it was thought husbands would always "grab" any resources (so the woman, as target, would not benefit). On the other hand the IRDP Household Development Officer felt that one should think rather about individual crops in relation

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<sup>22</sup> Raymond Apthorpe considers in some detail the properties of policy language in agricultural development, showing deconstructively how it tends to restrict meaning, interpretation and arguability (1984 pp. 127-141). His characterisation of different sorts of discourse I use comparatively below in relation to productionism and distributionism.

<sup>23</sup> Again, here is productionist emphasis on the need for things directly measurable: production targets.

to women, as in most households women had considerable autonomy in the growing and disposal of the food crops<sup>24</sup>. After listening to the various points the PAO concluded by saying "We can say, then, that all kinds of women should be selected for training to grow a variety of crops".

In summary, the PAO very much occupied a different orbit from his junior staff, protected from accountability in part by the form of language he used in public addresses and, as Hedlund found, through restricted and formalized relations on a one-to-one basis with junior staff<sup>25</sup> (1984, p. 234, referring to relations between AA and DAO). Unlike Hedlund's PAO, he seemed fairly confident in his position, and not at the mercy of the central administration. The differences may come down to individuals, but the decentralisation in administration since 1981 has effectively made the provinces more independent, at least to the extent of making provincial administrators fairly powerful figures.

#### Some conclusions

We have seen here that relationships with the administrative structure are important influences on the performance of agricultural extension staff, as are (referring to the previous chapter) relationships between staff and various groups in the rural communities they serve. The tendency for productionist techniques to

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<sup>24</sup> An opinion that I support elsewhere in this thesis.

<sup>25</sup> It is also interesting that the PAO alone among government staff evaded being interviewed by me. Perhaps ironically he said that the DAOs and field staff were better positioned than he to inform me on the detail of what was happening in Mansa district.

make production activities open to scrutiny is equally a problem within the extension hierarchy as between extension and village. The key actors, field-based extension staff, are made subject to increasingly invasive techniques of monitoring (as evidenced by the latest draft proposal for reporting formats), whilst they perceive their administrative and material conditions as poor in relation to the supposed importance of their job. There is much disaffection and resentment among the lower echelons of extension, and this has serious consequences for their work.

To understand extension clearly requires analysis which takes into account the political and social context of the extension system; yet, as Hedlund (1984 p. 226) asserted, such contexts have not figured in the descriptions of (and prescriptions for) extension emanating from ministries of agriculture and extension theorists (by which is meant people engaged in the study and development of agricultural administration). In concluding these two chapters I wish to look more closely at why social context is notably absent from extension theory, in terms of the characteristics of a productionist discourse; and then at the wider issue of there being fundamentally different understandings of what development is about, between villager and administration, which can be seen as premised on distributionism and productionism (though taking care to specify that both perspectives to varying degrees penetrate everyone; they are not intended as a dualism with empirical correlates).

Apthorpe has characterised the discursive styles of agricultural policy (as text) as physicalist, institutionalist, and distributionalist (1984, pp. 129-139). I will describe these briefly to show

where they converge with my productionist/distributionist distinction. In Apthorpe's schema, physicalism is premised on land, and natural resources in general, being the prime and limiting factors through which agricultural development may happen. In seeing the processes of development as products of man-land relations, physicalism unsurprisingly draws on the materials and methods of the natural sciences. Land is developed rather than reformed, and the market is seen as a causal mechanism for development, as opposed to an institution. Physicalism concerns itself with physical production, and does not see land as economic collateral, a financial market or a vehicle for political power. Institutionalism, in contrast, would have development as a cultural phenomenon, in which human relations are the scarcest factor, and land is seen in the context of man-man relations. It sees land in the terms which physicalism excludes. It is associated with sociological critiques of development, and has strong kinship with Durkheimianism. And distributionalism, as the name suggests, is not so much concerned with production as with consumption and distribution, and makes less reference to land than the other two styles of discourse. An activity such as farming is seen as occupational income. With an interest in people making choices between possible uses of goods, it draws on models of the rational actor, notably from cybernetics and game theory (contrasted with causality in physicalism and a form of structural-functionalism in institutionalism).

In my terms, productionism is quite akin to physicalism. As we shall see, though, when looking at the activities of a research organisation (ARPT), it is inclusive of some elements of institutionalism and, to a lesser extent, distributionalism (especially in

the contributions of the farming systems economist). Apthorpe's sense of distributionalism is rather different from my distributionism; in agricultural policy he considers a focus on the distribution of resources as described through a variety of reductionist models. I use it rather as an interpretative idiom for understanding some important elements in the way Mabumba people look at their world and its resources; i.e. in a more inductionist sense.

It is the productionist/physicalist tendency to consider development ultimately through production targets, and extension as the transmission of technical messages to achieve these targets, which makes for its inability to describe and thereafter respond to social context. It is not so much that those involved in government institutions do not realise there is a social context, as that their tasks of developing and disseminating technologies are, as they would be in the First World, cognitively abstracted as being "purely technical" and with no bearing on or relation with the historical, social, ideological and political.

Perhaps this aspect of productionism can most clearly be seen in the kinds of methodological change that were being proposed for extension in Luapula. As we saw, the response the ETO made to finding that only a small proportion of the rural population was contacted or even recognised by extension field staff was to suggest the development of more differentiated extension messages, tailored to different groups in rural society, which would be communicated by contact farmers specific to those groups. I have already suggested that such proposals imply a simplistic view of how communication operates, and a rather mechanistic one; here I want to emphasise the tendency of

productionism to deal in prescriptive categories, to describe people in an aggregative sense according (most often) to quantitative criteria which simultaneously diminish the individual and the social.

Suggestions for the future were that contact farmers should be chosen to represent emergent, peasant and traditional farmers, according to their proportion in the rural community and (continuing the donor-influenced national policy) that as many women as men be chosen, with special attention to female headed households. It was still expected that the community would make the decisions for itself, after guidance by field staff, to avoid any peer group bias.

In my report on the T&V system to ARPT, I suggested a move toward a more strategic selection and use of contact farmers, especially given the dearth of information that extension could provide on crops other than cash maize. For example, that local community leaders be selected as people to gather others for public meetings, or that someone with a bicycle be proposed to report farmers' problems to the AA. Such an approach would be an alternative to selection according to an abstract criterion such as level of maize production. I also suggested more, rather than less, intervention of AAs in selecting contacts, pointing out that the way decisions are arrived at in public meetings are intimately related to the power context operating, so that the powerless are highly unlikely to be selected for anything that would bring prestige or influence.<sup>26</sup>

Suggesting a strategic approach was to place emphasis on the fact

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This was perhaps a moot point. Even if the most powerless are selected to perform official functions, it is unlikely that local politics would allow them to do so.

that in needing to classify everything (including people) according to some quantitative criterion or other, productionism deals in units, not strategies or processes. Thus, it not only reduces people according to aggregate yardsticks, but places them in inert boxes. People might move between categories; indeed changes in numbers in each category are taken to indicate the influence of government intervention, but it is not known who has moved, or what these movements mean beyond the abstract quantity itself. Nor, importantly, are people's rapid movements into and out of maize production taken account of. Some of the theoretical issues involved here I will consider at greater length in the concluding chapter, but understanding of client groups by productionist institutions is, I would argue, seriously limited by their typological approach, in no small part because the Ushi people with whom I stayed saw government institutions very much from a strategic (and distributionist) viewpoint. This requires some explanation.

Kate Crehan (1988, p. 3) has suggested, drawing on Bakhtin's ideas, that the various actors in rural development in part of NorthWestern province be understood as participants in a continuing dialogue in which meanings attached to "development" are peculiar to individuals and groups, meanings which are continually in the process of contestation<sup>27</sup>. Certain meanings come to be more influential than others, that is to say power relations are expressed through them. It is these conflicts of meaning which tend to be interpreted by development institutions as failures of communication, or lack of

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Pottier, 1988, p. 102 on the creation from a politically motivated perspective of an imaginary past of communalistic production, in line with the tenets of Zambian Humanism.

understanding by the "targets". In contrast, Crehan sees meanings as historically constituted and (as a Marxist anthropologist) ultimately grounded in material conditions.

"Explaining such conflicts of meaning as the result of some kind of failure of communication is to ignore the complex web of power relations in which they are embedded. In the context of debates about "development", and particularly if we are genuinely interested in people being able to improve their living conditions *themselves*, it is vital that we examine just what is going on when the different actors talk to each other, whatever form this dialogue may take. And ultimately part of what is going on always has to do, in however mediated a form, with some kind of struggle between material interests."

(Crehan, 1988, p.18. original emphasis).

For Crehan, the divisions of meaning are seen as identifiable with the process of class struggle. With my focus on discourse, the notion of dialogue occurring between meanings remains illuminating.

One of Crehan's examples of different meanings attached to development concerned German aid and the Lima scheme. Whereas the donors looked on participation in Lima as the ladder to reaching higher production levels (like Sida in Luapula), the participants viewed it quite differently:

"..for these small-scale producers LIMA is not normally a step on the way to specialisation in market production, but rather a way of earning a small, but often vital, cash income, all of which is spent on such necessary items as clothes, children's school fees rather than being available for any kind of productive investment". (op.cit. p.9).

I would agree that the use to which government resources are put are often best seen as attempts at solving very immediate and pressing problems<sup>28</sup>. A related point Crehan makes is that when people become involved in state-oriented production (particularly of maize) they are well aware of all the rhetoric about feeding the nation, and

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. chapter 5 on budgetting.



see the provision of resources to them by the state as a sort of counter prestation to their aiding the state's production aims (ibid.)<sup>29</sup>. Such a view does not accord with that of a development institution which is trying to promote "self-reliance". These statements were made in relation to the observation that lima farmers tended to continue growing less than one hectare of maize using inputs supplied under the lima scheme, whether free or on credit.

"They (Lima farmers) are reluctant therefore to accept the planners' notion of "self-reliance" not because they do not understand it, but because it would seem to involve both a renunciation of certain claims on the state, and to ignore the farmers' real *de facto* dependence on state services." (ibid.).

My perspective on these sorts of observation for the Luapula case is that the tendency to relate to the government in terms of making claims to resources is an expression of a distributionist attitude to resource use. The relation between extension and the village can best be seen in this light, such that positive relations between the two (and indeed between field extension workers and their administrative conditions) pertain where extension provides resources (whether material, or less tangible, such as status) which people may take<sup>30</sup>, a channel extra to those already existing. Extension see themselves as imparting knowledge, but that is not their most important function from villagers' points of view.<sup>31</sup> Nowhere was

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. Quick, 1978, p. 64, on cooperatives, and Pottier, 1988, pp.94-95.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Pottier, 1988, p. 94 on popular interest in road maintenance.

<sup>31</sup> Of course, those who expressed a positive interest in extension were interested in new farming techniques, but these were not seen as in any way independent of the associated package of inputs which the government had been seen to supply with maize, i.e. the knowledge extension brings, together with the material resources, are considered external to previously existing rural activities.

this clearer than in relation to the Finnida Lima scheme.

In April I attended a Finnida Field Walk which was explained to me as being a forum at which other people could be shown what Lima farmers can achieve. We were taken to the farmer's maize field, and she was asked to explain to the gathering how she had planted and maintained the crop. Speeches were then made by Fundisha and the Finnida coordinators before opening the floor to questions for the Finnida representatives to answer. Fundisha's speech began with thanks to the government for providing free inputs to people to help them in their farming. He emphasised the need to work together, as some people were still lazy, or jealous of others' success in farming. They should also take advantage of the presence of the primary cooperative societies (here he made a comparison with ujamaa in Tanzania<sup>32</sup>).

The question session which followed showed that what were uppermost in the villagers' minds were rather different concerns.

When inspecting the field they had been asked to look around for any problems with the crop, which the Finnida "experts" would then explain. Most of the examples found were of genetic abnormalities whose identities were not known to the Finnida people (in English let alone CiBemba. They were the sorts of problem that would only be familiar to a plant breeder). The villagers were clearly dissatisfied with the answers, in spite of the protestations by the institutional staff that only very few plants were affected so they

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Now a rather peculiar comparison as the cooperatives are almost entirely oriented to marketing, not production.

could safely forget about these sports<sup>33</sup>. So the subjects of questioning soon shifted to what the villagers saw as relevant.

Q: "Which people will be taken for training courses this year? Who will bring fertilisers, now they are no longer free; Finnida or the cooperative?"

A: "Mr Fundisha will select people for the courses. The fertiliser will be brought to Chinkopeka cooperative, as for other farmers".

Q: "You give teaching on the correct way to apply fertilisers, but we still have the problem of receiving them on time from the cooperative".

A: (Chairman of Chinkopeka cooperative) "That's not our fault. It's because of poor delivery from LCU".

Q: "Will fertiliser for Finnida farmers be subsidised?"

A: "No".

Q: "I am not a Finnida farmer, but can I get advice from someone who is?"

A: "Yes, just ask who is a Lima farmer in your village, and ask him or her to teach you about the crop they have been trained in"<sup>34</sup>.

Q: "Can I be taken for a Lima training course?"

A: "No, because you are too old and established in farming"<sup>35</sup>.

After some prompting for questions from women:

Q: "I would like to become a farmer (using the English word). Can I be selected for a training course?"

A: "You should ask Mr. Fundisha".

Q: (From the same woman) "Who are the Lima farmers in Monga?"

A: (Fundisha listed the names).

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<sup>33</sup> Again here we have the productionist emphasis on aggregates, and lack of interest in individual peculiarities.

<sup>34</sup> See chapter 5 also on channels of access to knowledge about cash maize farming.

<sup>35</sup> See also chapters 5 and 8 on the institutional focus on youth.

The contrast between Fundisha's rhetorical emphasis on cooperation in production and the villagers' interest in gaining resources on a personal basis was striking. He expressed relative keenness at working in Monga because the people were quite cooperative: "They have even worked together to brew the beer for today" he said, as an indication of this fact. Nevertheless, many of the non-Lima farmers present were unaware of who the Lima farmers were in their own village. In general, those who had been trained did not communicate their new knowledge to others except where this might contribute to their standing in village politics (for example, the young woman married to a headman's son, mentioned in the previous chapter). What extension had to offer was seen as distributed goods to be put to productively individualistic ends (the fertilisers; status that can be gained from becoming a contact farmer, etc.). What is more, this applied to extension staff themselves, as well as villagers (it should not be forgotten that most staff were members of ethnic groups within the province). Though they tended to see their work in terms of educating people in productionist principles, extension seemed to work best when all parties were in receipt of resources that they felt were commensurate with their efforts.

Chinkopeka camp is a germane example. Here the AA, Mr. Mumbi, found that his contact farmers (all male and emergent farmers) were very active in calling public meetings and reporting problems. With the cooperative society right there, Mumbi was able to take fairly prompt action, and delays with input deliveries were less serious than elsewhere. Local enthusiasm for maize production corresponded with the expectations of his training. And, just as importantly, he had a keen attitude toward work because the arrival of Sida had meant new

overalls for him, and generous allowances for travel to training workshops in Mansa. In many senses, then, extension in Chinkopeka appeared to be working. But, as elsewhere, working only for those actively engaged in maize cash cropping. The "subsistence" villagers in Chinkopeka felt just as remote from the extension service as in Mabumba.

The ways in which people are excluded from, or choose to remain outside, productionist influence I have not yet dwelt on. In the proceeding chapters processes of inclusion and exclusion are treated more systematically in looking at the influence of the churches, cooperatives, other government departments and local politics.

## Chapter 8: Other institutions.

### Introduction.

The foregoing chapters on extension have focused on one key institution which is articulating a productionistic perspective in agriculture. Together with chapter 5, this chapter examines the ways that Mabumba villagers still manage to deploy a distributionist logic in the arena of productionist efforts. It considers how other formal institutions (the churches, the Department of Social Development, and the Cooperatives), have become involved in the promotion of maize cash cropping, and how they, like extension, appear to construct the rural society in which they intervene. In stressing the imaginativeness of distributionism, I will show how some people have managed to subvert productionist interests, whilst appearing to support them.

I have tended to talk of productionism and distributionism as if they operate at some preconscious, ideological level; to inform, indeed determine, the subjectivities of those working within them. Sets of absolute presuppositions. But whilst I am arguing that productionism and distributionism are particular perspectives on the world of economics, they are also logics for the attainment of economic ends; logics which can be understood simultaneously by the same person and manipulated strategically. This chapter continues to explore how institutions and villagers differentially understand social reality, but with the focus on villagers' adaptability through the pursuit of distributionist strategies. My examples will illustrate how elements of distributionism can be seen as adaptive, rather than defunct, in a situation of scarcity and inflation where adoption of slowly

accumulative productive investment might be unsustainable and risk laden.

An important secondary argument in the chapter concerns the significance of the Protestant churches and their ideologies; particularly the Watchtower movement (Jehovah's witnesses). Other Zambian observers (especially Long, 1968, and Poewe, 1978; 1981) have reported an association between economic differentiation (in the sense of adopting capitalist production) and the strategic membership of protestant denominations which favour the nuclear family as production and consumption unit. As I shall argue, my evidence from Mabumba tends to suggest there is no necessary connection, and it appears that the idea of Protestantism in its Weberian, sociological formulation, has been rather ethnocentrically transferred to analyses of Christianity in Zambia.

### 1. The church

A detailed look at the Christian church in Mabumba is included in this thesis because of the sorts of questions alluded to above about the influence of Protestant ideologies, but also because it (especially the Roman Catholic church) is actively involved in economic development. Since the church, conventionally, is an institution entirely separate from secular government, it is interesting in the development context (as non-spiritual intervention) to ask in what senses is the church's role discriminable from the government's?

To answer the question requires careful analysis of how church representatives conceive their interventions; and how the members of

churches in Mabumba perceive and respond to them. This task occupies the first part of the chapter, followed by comparison with the constructions made by Social Development and Cooperatives staff.

#### Church history in Mabumba.

There are many different denominations present in Mabumba. To see how their influences differ it is necessary to give some history of how they came to be where they are, since their empirical distribution, which cannot be divorced from their potential ideological influence, is very skewed in Luapula Province.

The earliest missionary influence to affect Mabumba came from the White Fathers (La Société des Missionnaires de Notre Dame d'Afrique), whose first mission in northern Zambia was founded at Kayambi, Northern Province, in 1895. By 1905 they had established a large, influential mission at Lubwe on the shores of lake Chifunauli in what is now Samfya district, and Mabumba fell within its parish as part of the Bangweulu vicariate (Lupambo, pers. comm.).

By this time, various Protestant denominations were also seeking to establish a following in Luapula. The earliest of these had been the CMML (Brethren) mission at Johnston Falls (now Mambilima), the original site of Fort Rosebery on the Luapula river, in 1897, and later missions were established further north (notably by the London Missionary Society at Mbereshi), and in chief Milambo's. It is of importance, though, to realise that by the time an administration began working in the new Fort Rosebery (beginning in 1903; see Kay, 1960, p.1), the Catholic influence was firmly established in much of Northern Province with a spur into Luapula from Lake Bangweulu



westward across the plateau to Fort Rosebery.

The relative development of missions thenceforward was influenced (at least geographically) by the administration. The British wished to limit the influence of the White Fathers on the grounds that they were a. French, and b. Catholic<sup>1</sup>, and to this end actively encouraged a variety of Protestant missions to establish themselves in so far "unclaimed" territory in the Luapula valley: by the end of the 1920s the Seventh Day Adventists, Methodists, African Evangelicals and Watchtower Movement were also present in Luapula, particularly in the populous area in the northern part of the valley (Lupambo, pers. comm.).

At Lubwe, Fr. Jean-Marie Colibault encouraged an evangelistic attitude among his catechists, who were sent out westwards from 1923 onwards, and helped establish the first churches and schools in Mabumba. According to Garvey, an active, participatory attitude was expected in these catechists because Colibault was impressed by the organisation of Protestant missions and the self-sufficiency of Protestant village congregations (1974, p.233); whilst he also wished to consolidate Catholic influence. It was Colibault also who helped establish a Roman Catholic mission in the Fort Rosebery area (at Kabunda, in 1939<sup>2</sup>), though it was the pioneering Zambian catechists and other lay members who provided much of the initiative.

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the oldest informants in Mabumba remember clashes occurring between district government staff and missionaries in the 1930s and 1940s.

<sup>2</sup> It was because of the British Administration's veto that a mission could not be established in Fort Rosebery itself. It was not until 1952 that the move was allowed, and Fort Rosebery eventually became centre of a Catholic diocese in 1961.

The situation in the Fort Rosebery and Samfya areas would seem to have been rather different from the Bloc Catholique of Northern Province (op. cit. p.235), since the Catholic influence was less consolidated, and competition for territory with various Protestant missions ensued. This competitiveness was further encouraged from the 1930s onwards when bishop Rey defined the work of catechists as "Catholic Action", an idea having its mainspring in Pope Pius XI's promotion of "Azione Catholica" (an attempt to establish better relations between church and secular state in Italy).

The idea of Catholic Action, in Northern Rhodesia (following a model from Zomba in Nyasaland), was to involve villagers more fully in church work, and for the church to take a greater interest in social and economic aspects of village life (in addition to evangelisation). Particularly was this the case after 1953, when the political struggles toward national independence became of concern to the church, inspired by the Young Christian Worker Movement, YCW (founded in Belgium). The Prefect Apostolic for Fort Rosebery reported in that year a particularly strong body of action-minded Catholics in Luapula (op. cit. p.312), and in 1956 a conference on social action was called at Lubwe. Concurrent with this official emphasis, and alongside increasing activity of the Watchtower movement, local Catholics themselves became very active in promoting their own church's interests contra Protestant adherents. At Lubwe, a group of evangelists (BaEvangelist) founded by mission school teachers countered the propaganda of Watchtower members by copying their aggressive style of proselytism, and engaged in debate with their rivals at public rallies. In 1956, one of these evangelists, an active community leader, became the first African layman to hold a

full-time post in the Catholic apostolate in Northern Rhodesia (op. cit. p.314).

Local perceptions: church representatives.

This brief historical synopsis is suggestive of a distinctive, active role of the Roman Catholic church (by its leaders and members) in an area including Mabumba from the beginning of this century to 1960: a background supported by my data with a more recent and local focus. Three key informants provided detailed accounts of the practical involvement of their church in the community, and the philosophy behind such "action" orientation.

Fr. Luchembe is the son of one of the original catechists who helped found a mission near Fort Rosebery, and was from 1955-58 parish priest for an area including Fort Rosebery and Mabumba. At the time the church was very active in Mabumba, both in encouraging spiritual development and assisting financially and practically with housing and agricultural projects; in fact more active than from Independence until 1985. In the '50s it was the church alone which was intervening in such a way in the villages around Fort Rosebery, through the YCW.

These interventions were decided on the findings of monthly survey questionnaires, administered by a chosen member of each Catholic congregation. The results of these were analysed by the church, and passed for gazeteering to provincial government. Once projects (such

as vegetable growing<sup>3</sup>) were started, Luchembe would come out to the villages to inspect and offer encouragement.

The extent of these interventions in the 1950s is not clear, and Fr. Luchembe was of the opinion that the church's main agricultural activity at the time was the running of the mission farm at Bahati (a commercial enterprise which still operates). Around Independence village activities were suspended, as the new mission became established in Fort Rosebery/Mansa. White Fathers continued to visit Mabumba for mass on some Sundays, and informally a certain amount of economic aid continued (offers to transport people and goods to town, etc.), but it wasn't until 1975 that a Dutch Father began to introduce a new Action-oriented village programme.

Initially, a few families were delivered seed and fertiliser, whilst father Cornelius began a "publicity and conscientising" campaign to involve more people. This led to the introduction in 1979 of the Farm Family Scheme which aroused little enthusiasm in Mabumba at the time, but now has a long waiting list. As the name suggests, the family was the chosen unit for intervention.

Fr. Cornelius expressed the purpose of the scheme to me as being to "increase the prosperity and happiness of rural families, and provide them with a better diet". To this end he would select families with few material resources, and those which would have a good chance of succeeding in new forms of production, which to him meant young men

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<sup>3</sup> In chapter 2 I have described vegetable growing in Mabumba as a new activity. As a sustained activity with institutional support that is true. After the Catholic interventions petered out and resources (especially seeds) failed to be provided, village interest also died and was only significantly rekindled in the 1980s.

who were just married and starting to settle down. Though unmarried men might be equally enthusiastic and strong, he pointed out that the FFS had a commitment to families, and the practical difficulty of men tending to remove to their bapongoshi for brideservice<sup>4</sup>. The significance of this objection lay in the training element of the scheme: in the same way as in the SIDA-funded Lima programme, the participating families were to be introduced to a "ladder" of production levels, requiring continued participation over several years. Grouped in sets of ten, they were supplied with seed (of groundnuts, beans and maize) and fertiliser, on a loan basis, for three seasons, sufficient for one lima in the first season, two in the second, and three in the third. During the third year, successful families (those managing to produce at least sixteen bags of maize) were taken for training in ox handling, and two oxen and a Scotch cart subsequently given to each group. After the first batch of recruits were trained it was decided to give the oxen on credit (no longer gifts) to encourage, in Fr. Cornelius's words, self-sufficiency.

To 1988, Fr. Cornelius reported the scheme to be running well: six hundred and thirty families had been included in the scheme in Mansa district, and the first group of thirteen families in Mabumba chiefdom had been supplied with their oxen and carts, though in a few cases he noticed that people had slaughtered the oxen for sale, rather than using them for draft. Of late, participants were requesting inputs almost exclusively for maize; a shift he approved

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<sup>4</sup> This particular priest had been in northern Zambia for many years and believed that uxori-local marriage involving movement between villages was still a predominant pattern.

since he saw maize farming as the most secure way to earn cash. Though he would have liked people to work cooperatively as a group, this was not a condition he wanted to impose (being aware of productive individualism; the same latitude was allowed in the church's other schemes), and he noted that in several of the family groups, one household head bought the oxen and then hired them out to the other participants. Further, he stressed that the Farm Family Scheme was a material intervention by his church, without spiritual intentions: indeed, scheme participants need not be Roman Catholics.

When asked for comparative impressions on other institutions at work in Mabumba, Fr. Cornelius said "I never see evidence of them". He felt villagers trusted him and his ability to adhere to promises about resources. This was because he regularly visited the villages, spoke CiBemba fluently, and offered some informal services outside the scope of Finnida and co., such as collecting villagers' maize and selling it under his name directly to the cooperative union. He was aware of having a better record for efficiency than non-church institutions.

The third and newest form of church intervention in agriculture was under the auspices of Fr. Mwale at Mansa mission. The efforts of the Young Catholic Workers' movement had gradually died out since independence, but had been replaced by a new scheme originating in Vatican concern for promotion of youth. This international effort was manifested locally by the diocesan bishops calling for new strategies to support youth, in concert with widespread concern within government over urban youth unemployment (government response

being rural resettlement schemes<sup>5</sup>). Thus Misapela clubs were launched in 1985, aimed in the villages at agriculture, and in Mansa at teaching artesanal skills and other remunerative activities.

With its focus on individual producers, the aims of Misapela were slightly less ambitious than the Farm Family scheme. Any young person could be selected for aid, whether married or not. In the first year inputs were to be given as gifts, sufficient to grow one lima of maize, beans or groundnuts. In the second year, only those whose crops had failed would receive the aid again. The same would apply in the third year, but the inputs given as loans. Fr. Mwale stated the project's aim as aiding young people to set themselves up in "farming" and become self-sufficient, and it was important in this regard to stress to participants that continued supply of resources could not be guaranteed: "we don't want it to be like carrot and stick", in Fr. Mwale's words. To 1988, only young men had become involved, but this did not bother Fr. Mwale. He thought that women were not interested in maize, and since men would be heads of household, their wives would benefit indirectly.

As with the other schemes, the resources came from Zimbabwe via the Catholic secretariat in Lusaka, and Misapela had a good record for timely delivery and payment, since an arrangement was made for the parish to buy the crops directly from villagers and sell them on to LCU (Luapula Cooperative Union). Likewise, following the general pattern with external interventions, the interest of participants had shifted almost exclusively to maize, encouraged further in this case

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<sup>5</sup> See chapter 5.

by the failure of Zimbabwean groundnut seed imported in 1985, and mission resources being stretched to meet just the seasonally earlier requirements of maize. By 1987-88, only maize was being grown.

At the time of our interview (July 1988) Fr. Mwale had two hundred Misapela members in his parish, sixty-six of whom were assisted with farming, six of them in chief Mabumba's village. The rest were urban residents taking part in carpentry training workshops and establishing fish ponds. He had made regular tours of inspection, especially in March (the middle of the growing season), and was pleased with participants' progress. Both he and Fr. Cornelius were aware of a groundswell of interest among young people in "farming" over the past five years in Mabumba. He hoped that the scheme could continue, but worries about lack of funding underlay his stress on self-sufficiency: for example, though one of the sisters went occasionally with a mission vehicle to fetch and deliver items like maize bags (the farmers had to pay the petrol costs), father Mwale preferred they should come on their own initiative to the mission since they must learn "to stand on their own".

Interviews with Misapela participants in Mabumba suggest they were responding to the scheme according to a different rationale from what Fr. Mwale expected. True, Catholic aid was popular because of its efficient and timely organisation (this included provision of vegetable seed at the mission, which was of better quality and more frequently available than from the government outlet, Namboard). Further, this church alone had the resources to offer material assistance with agriculture, a factor which had even determined some



people's church membership, especially young men's. However, involvement was frequently opportunistic. Of all the participants I met, not one was obtaining a loan solely through Misapela. Andrea, a man noted for his hard work and cleverness, had joined Misapela specifically because he heard inputs would be on offer. Significantly, he had attended courses in maize growing through Misapela, Finnida and village extension whose content was more or less identical, not with the intention of learning anything new, but of opening new channels to inputs.

In 1987-88 he had loans also from Kaole primary cooperative society (see below) and Finnida (he had put himself forward for selection as a Lima farmer), and had managed to do this undetected by the authorities, by getting his wife to apply for the cooperative loan. In this way he had managed to plant 1.5 hectares of maize on credit, and harvested a total of forty bags, ten of them from the Misapela plot. The White Father, as expected, was the first to come to take the crop to LCU. Andrea took fifteen of the bags to him, thereby getting a high proportion of his income early, and simultaneously appearing to be an exemplary farmer for achieving so high a yield. This he did specifically to guarantee future favour from Misapela, whilst his low yields elsewhere he could attribute to "poor rains."

#### The ideological position of the Roman Catholic church.

The picture given so far suggests a sustained involvement of the Roman Catholic church in the economy of Mabumba; in an evangelising sense since early in this century, and in a specifically material way over the past thirty-five years. But this is to ignore an important ideological shift which has happened in the latter period. Fr.

Luchembe, himself highly educated and an historian of Luapula, located the shift in a widespread change of consciousness which accompanied the struggle for Independence.

Until the late 1950s, the Roman Catholic church in Northern Rhodesia assumed a paternalistic role in relation to its subjects. The connotations of priest-as-father were quite literal. The laity were not expected to do much for themselves, either in terms of running their churches, or organising the economic surveys and interventions with which father Luchembe was involved. The priest made all the decisions. A will to devolve more power in the running of the church came from the nationalist concern with self-determination which carried with it notions of personal initiative, operating at the level of the individual as well as the black nation state. And just as posts within government institutions became progressively nationalised after independence, so too in the Catholic priesthood representation of black Zambians grew. Whilst the church was enabled to become much more a church for itself at the local level, the process of devolution extended also down to the laity. People began to be encouraged to build their own churches, and to run various cooperative clubs in the church, such as the Vincent de Paul.

Thus, in Fr. Luchembe's terms, his church began in the 1950s to chart an explicitly material course in its mission activities in Mansa, whilst continuing its spiritual function in the villages. Since independence, the locus for achieving material progress has been transferred progressively downwards: an ideological shift to encouraging "self-sufficiency", but one that has to be seen as grounded in the deteriorating national economy of Zambia. By the

late 1980s devolution had meant little further involvement of the church hierarchy with village congregations as spiritual bodies, and the presence of White Fathers in Mabumba had come to be almost exclusively to do with agricultural aid. These changes, if elaborated a little more, are interesting for two reasons. First, they suggest a strong coincidence between the Roman Catholic church and government institutions in their constructions of rural people. Secondly, they indicate a lack of substantive difference in ideology between Roman Catholic and Protestant denominations where economic behaviour is concerned. I will illustrate the first point by further analysis of church professionals' perceptions of villagers; and the second by recourse to how the members of different denominations in Mabumba express their own churches' beliefs, and act on the material opportunities presented through these churches.

#### How do villagers live?

A look at what my three priestly informants said about the Roman Catholic schemes reveals some important premises beneath their understandings of the nature of village society and the processes of development, which suggest the recent devolutionary movement has not erased paternalistic thought entirely.

First, the concern with the family. Though not made entirely explicit, the family in mind is the nuclear family of husband and wife and children, in both normative and prescriptive senses (it is assumed most villagers do and should live in such units). Thus, though the existence and effects of social obligations tied to matriliney are recognised (brideservice for bapongoshi; wide distribution of resources among matrikinspeople), these are perceived

as obstructions to the Farm Family Scheme, and, to a lesser extent, Misapela. The patrifocal household has always been the ideal encouraged by Christian influences, on moral grounds: matriliney must be condemned for failing to emphasise marriage as a permanent and sacred institution (e.g. the Catholic church banning divorce, with threats of expulsion from congregations; Richards, A.I., 1940b, p.82). Yet to this moral concern, an ethic of investment has been appended. The family is a moral institution, yet also the appropriate unit for the social and physical organisation of production, and Fr. Cornelius talked repeatedly in terms of the assiduous, enthusiastic young man expanding production, whilst supported by his wife, and in the interests of raising healthy children. Matrilineal obligations he saw as leakages of resources, and disincentives to the achievement of self-sufficiency; the deadweight keeping people living near the margins of subsistence. Of course, underlying this construction of the "farm family" is the assumption of an essentially harmonious and cooperative unit: the father as leader and benefactor will see to the concerns of all household members. Hence Fr. Mwale's belief that women's relative lack of involvement in cash cropping is of little concern. In this, the Roman Catholic church is very close to the thinking of many government institutions<sup>6</sup>. What is important to my argument (c.f. Protestant influences) is that a concern with the materialist,

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<sup>6</sup> The relation between these strands of thought could be the subject of an extensive investigation. Taking a phenomenology of religion perspective, it could be argued that African nations such as Zambia, like European nations, are fundamentally informed by a Judaeo-Christian ethic and morality. To claim something as purely secular becomes suspect. It is likely, then, that the governmental construction of family follows the church's, not vice versa.

economic potential of this unit seems to have gained strong ground within the local Roman Catholic church, at least since independence.

The second point to be made concerns the accent on youth. It is the young conjugal household which is perceived as the most appropriate object of intervention. This, ostensibly, because the young are the most enthusiastic about new opportunities, have the greatest capacity to work hard, and represent the future of rural society. If consciously these are the reasons, there does seem to be a more fundamental principle at work: the young are the chosen objects for intervention because, in a sense, they are a tabula rasa. They are malleable and can be taught. They have not yet been stamped with the irrevocable conservatism imputed to subsistence villagers.

Such educationalism was seen as necessary to the church's economic project, a fundamental enlightenment. In Fr. Luchembe's terms:

"It used to be the case that if a man had one hectare of cassava he would consider himself rich. Now, through the teaching of extension and the church, he has learned the economic potential of farming, hence the scramble by everyone to grow maize. People have learned that they didn't used to know how to use the land adequately to gain a living."

Alongside this emancipatory vision of the educational activities of institutions is an accent on the importance of exemplification at the village level. Fr. Cornelius felt that where the FFS was working particularly well this was due to "strong members of the community setting good examples by their field practices". Of course, these are perceptions from within the church hierarchy. We must now consider the Roman Catholic church, and others, from the perspectives of the village.

Local perceptions: the church as seen from the village.

To set the scene, some basic statistics are worthwhile. A random survey of forty-three households<sup>7</sup> in chief Mabumba's revealed the

following church membership of household heads:

| <u>Denomination</u> | <u>Number of households</u> | <u>Percentage in sample</u> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Roman Catholic      | 27                          | 63                          |
| CMML*               | 9                           | 21                          |
| Watchtower¿         | 3                           | 7                           |
| UCZ#                | 2                           | 5                           |
| SDA~                | 1                           | 2                           |
| New Apostolic       | 1                           | 2                           |
| <u>Total</u>        | <u>43</u>                   | <u>100</u>                  |

\* Christian Missions in Many Lands.

¿ Name used locally to denote Zambian Jehovah's Witnesses<sup>8</sup>.

# United Church of Zambia.

~ Seventh Day Adventists.

More widely, all informants who were asked professed membership of one church or another, regardless of how active they were in church attendance. Further, membership of the household head did not define membership for other household members: it was common to find, say, a husband in the Roman Catholic church, and his wife in CMML, or even a Watchtower man married to a Roman Catholic woman. It was explained that church membership was purely a matter of personal preference, and that children decided around the age of twelve whether to stay in either parent's congregation or go elsewhere, a choice which could depend on material considerations.

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<sup>7</sup> Drawn from ARPT's sample frame census.

<sup>8</sup> As Gunnison indicates (1959, p.205), the African Watchtower movement had died out by 1950 in Luapula, to be replaced by Jehovah's Witnesses. However, in Mabumba, the term "Watchtower" has not been displaced, so I have preserved it in the text.

Though this may be too small a sample to have statistical significance, it does indicate the predominance of the Roman Catholic church. The exact distribution was not the same throughout the chiefdom: for example, the Watchtower church is located in Chisongo, to the east of the chief's village, but even there the congregation numbered only about seventy in 1988, and Roman Catholics were locally still in the majority.

So much, though, for numerical analysis of church membership. What does membership mean in ideological and material terms? Are there significant correlations between ideological and socio-economic differences, according to denomination, as Long and Poewe assert?

#### Protestant Ideology?

Empirically, there is reason to suspect the generalisation that those entering capitalist style production would seek to legitimise divorce from matrilineal demands through the adoption of Protestant ideologies (c.f. Poewe, 1981, p. 82, referring to men). Farmers living away from villages are usually retired miners: those I interviewed showed as varied church membership as the rest of the community. The question must then be addressed, what are the substantive and ideological differences between the churches present in Mabumba? The Watchtower movement might appropriately be considered first, since it has been treated elsewhere as exemplary of individualist Protestantism.

Payson and Enalia (the incoming Social Development Officer) were two of the few Watchtower members in the chief's village. They both gave a focus on industriousness as the chief distinguishing feature of

their church. The need to work hard, both opined, was because man had misused the earth. There being only room in heaven, après Armageddon, for an elect of 144,000, one has a duty to work toward perfection in the earthly life. Lazy people, then, were not welcome in the church. One purpose of this hard work is to provide the basis for the successful rearing of a family. The focus of teaching here is the nuclear family: wives respecting and serving their husbands; husbands loving and protecting their wives and children (Ephesians 5, 22-23 and 25 are given as key references). There are also duties to love one's neighbour and care for the poor, notions fairly alien in a situation where neighbours and the poor are usually one's kin<sup>9</sup>. Nonetheless, a sense of collective charitableness is beginning to take root, across all Christian denominations, as when a crippled old man was refused membership of the Roman Catholic Vincent de Paul club on the grounds that he should be an object of their activities.

Great stress is put on the importance of marriage by Watchtower members, and that the union should be cooperative: "husbands and wives should share activities to show love, and therefore to know God", as Enalia put it. In this regard, there is some evidence in Mabumba of a potential for Watchtower ideology to deny matrilineal obligations, but only in a restricted sense. As Paison said, it is a bad tradition (lutambi lubi), that if one's wife, one's child, or a child of one's wife from a previous marriage died one would be blamed by the in-laws, who could then demand compensation in money or goods.

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<sup>9</sup> There is no term in CiBemba which can directly translate the concept of "the poor", only the words mulanda and mupina (plural prefix ba) meaning "a poor person". Crehan deals more extensively with the foreignness of notions of institutional charity in a matrilineal society (1987, p. 232).



Nevertheless, he approved of requirements like brideservice labour for bapongoshi because around marriage a man can expect much help from his parents-in-law. I did not come across any cases of the Watchtower focus on marriage being used to shrug off matrilineal demands, nor is it necessary to see men's irritation over the influence of wives' kin in relation to Protestantism. Rather, it would seem to be part of the inevitable tension between marriage and matrikin inherent in such a matrilineal system, as explained in chapter 3.

Along with the Watchtower insistence on hard work goes an ethos of abstemiousness so that most households claim not to be drinkers; though it is quite acceptable to brew and sell to others. The accent on avoiding alcohol extends to other Protestant denominations, particularly the CMMML congregation, who spend considerable energy in their services on denigrating the general licence of Catholics. In so doing they are supporting the ostensible views of the chief (though himself a Catholic) who proclaims that people should not drink during the working day (i.e. before mid-day) except where beer is given as payment for work parties. This is more a matter of self-presentation than seriously held ideology though: when away from their home villages self-discipline can easily be relaxed, as when I embarrassed a group of CMMML church elders from the chief's village at a beer party in Mpemba.

A second, and perhaps unexpected element in Watchtower ideology is an encouragement of cooperation in productive processes, primarily within the "nuclear" family, but more generally within the congregation. Thus, watchtower men would form groups to perform

particular jobs (agricultural, building, etc.) for payment out of a joint fund created through the church. Furthermore, some sort of welfare system is operated so that, in an example given me, if a member was burgled, other members would get together to help out with the provision of bedding, clothing or whatever other essentials had gone missing. As we shall see, such group activities are common to most of the Christian denominations in Mabumba. In this context it is interesting also to mention Enalia's work. She was a vocal supporter of her church (even trying to sell me the movement's publications on several occasions) yet saw its teachings as inherently appropriate to her work as Social Development Officer: that people should strive toward a better life, but strive together, as ordered by Dr. Kaunda's philosophy of humanism. So, it would seem that the depiction of Protestants elsewhere in Zambia as champions of productive individualism is a rather uncritical labelling<sup>10</sup>.

The Watchtower people, are, however, distinguishable from other denominations in their ideal and actual household arrangements more nearly resembling the Western model than what I have been describing in chapters 3 to 6. In Payson's case, his wife assisted him in the fermenting of sikana wini<sup>11</sup>, which he later sold, whilst they did not make a distinction between whose fields were his or hers, and he was found doing some jobs in the food crop fields, such as weeding, which

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<sup>10</sup> One problem with these analyses is slippage in the use of terms. Poewe (1981) seems at some points to refer to the individual producer; at other times to be talking of individualism at the level of the nuclear family. As I have shown in chapter 4, a discourse perspective aids in examining necessary qualifications to such terminology.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix 1.

other men would have shunned.

It is this accent on productive cooperation within the nuclear household, with marriage as its foundation, which is distinctive to Watchtower members; the object being to produce a wide range of goods and live a satisfying life. Crucially, though, these tenets and practices do not refer to the distribution of goods. In this respect Payson was much like other men in Mabumba: he saw his reputation for hard work as coming partly through his ability to distribute goods generously to kin. And, he resisted entry into maize production (that most capitalist of enterprises), because he saw the production and distribution of food as life's primary aim, and both he and his wife could rely on receiving some assistance from his son's maize farm. He saw himself simultaneously as a strong upholder of the ethic of his church, and faithful to the principles of matriliney, and it would seem, at least in his case, that this was not a contradiction.

My reading, then, is that although certain aspects of Watchtower ideology might be used to justify withdrawal from matrilineal obligations, this has not happened in Mabumba. There seems no strong ideological urge to do so. At the same time, there are factors militating against people isolating themselves geographically. As discussed in chapter 9, the government and chief Mabumba have together proscribed the dispersal of rural population in Mansa district. Having thus to remain for the most part in the villages, there is a second, powerful reason why Watchtower members should try not to stand out as different from other people. During the late 1960s and early 1970s the church was heavily persecuted, in Malawi

and Zambia, for refusing to declare allegiance to any leader save God. Independence was asserted through refusal to sing the national anthem at public meetings, or to salute the flag. For these reasons, children of Watchtower members were often sent home from school, and more severe sanctions came in the form of attacks on property. In 1969 Payson had the finest house in the chief's village, which was burnt down by UNIP vigilantes. He removed himself and his family to Chisongo, where there were more Watchtower friends. As recompense, the chief asked him to come back to his village in 1973, after the trouble had subsided, which Payson decided to do.

Since that time, Watchtower members have stopped actively antagonising the Party, though they still resist becoming Party members. In Mabumba, they take care just to be like other members of the community. As one non-member put it, "the Watchtower people have become much more sociable these days"<sup>12</sup>.

#### The other churches and church-led enterprise.

What then of membership in other churches at village level, in relation to economic activities? Do they indicate a significant role of differing ideologies? In short, the answer would seem to be no. The Roman Catholic, CMMI and Seventh Day Adventist churches all have

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The issue of comparability with Poewe's work is a thorny one, given the passage of time and economic differentia between the two field work areas. It is surprising, though, that she does not report antagonism against Watchtower members in the early 1970s, which may have been as significant to their social removal at that time, as wanting to break economic ties with matrikin. My main argument with her is not that Protestantism has been of no significance in economic differentiation in Luapula, but that she may have overinterpreted a link between ideology and practice where the particular ideology in question is not the same in its European and Zambian manifestations.

schemes, run autonomously by village congregations, for the provision of labour for agricultural and other tasks, such as building. In chapter 2 we saw the example of Brenda using a group of women obtained through the Roman Catholic church to harvest finger millet. Such work parties can be organised in several ways. First, they may be obtained on demand at the Sunday services, the amount and type of payment originating with the individual who desires assistance. Secondly, a collective fund is administered through the church, into which church club (Vincent de Paul) members regularly put donations. The money is used to pay for group labour, and members can individually receive assistance in rotation. It is often the case, as I observed in the CMML church, that if a member of a church work party fails to turn up, he or she will be expected to make a cash donation to the club in lieu. Thirdly, those who are deemed by the rest of the church to be poor, may get voluntary assistance as a charitable act, and though the recipients of such services would normally be members of the particular congregation, it is not a stipulated condition.

Labour organised through church clubs has become an important feature of agriculture in Mabumba, and there seems little difference in its organisation between denominations. Like other agricultural activities institution-led, the focus is the expansion of maize production, encouraged, especially in the Catholic church, by the informal delivery services offered by the White Fathers. There are also congregation members who do not seek involvement in club activities because of preferring to be productively individualistic. Senior women and men who can rely on much assistance from junior matrikin tend to be in this group. With the youth and male focus of

the church hierarchy, it is these people who tend to make up the bulk of membership in clubs like Vincent de Paul. Thus the emphasis of the church hierarchy tends to be reproduced at village level.

## 2. The Department of Social Development.

The Department of Social Development, formed by the amalgamation of Community Development and Social Welfare in 1982 (a merger necessitated by financial strictures) aims, unlike the line ministries, to intervene in a range of aspects of village life. Examining perceptions of the department's work, from its representatives and villagers, and their interaction in Mabumba, is suggestive, however, of a fair degree of coincidence with the approach of other institutions, the church included.

Enalia had arrived in Mabumba to take over from Samuel, the retiring Social Development Officer, at a critical time for the department. As in the Roman Catholic church, the decision had been made to focus more strongly on encouraging self-sufficiency, with government resources increasingly scarce. This ideological shift underlies the village responses to the department I found during field work.

When Samuel was trained in the 1960s, the premise for his work (which he described as theoretically grounded in human relations and psychology) was that by living with people sympathetically, one could learn how best to encourage their economic potential:

"The biggest aim of the department has always been to educate the brain of the individual, so that he can be self-sufficient and use his own initiative".

Practically, he learned how to facilitate women's clubs, where they would be taught home economics, nutrition, aspects of child care, and so forth. Young men were encouraged to form youth clubs for

cooperative farming, and building. At the time, plenty of resources such as building materials were available through the government, and few restrictions were imposed on how people participated.

He came to Mabumba in 1983, finding his way in to working with the community through the already existing Kakwema women's club which until then had focused on home economics activities. He facilitated an ill-fated poultry project, and also a more successful joint maize farming enterprise. Apart from organising the delivery of resources to Kakwema, as grant-in-aid, he also gave the women seminars on maize farming and running a cooperative.

He did not, however, run any self-help projects (aimed at individuals, rather than clubs) because by 1986 government funds had run very low. For this reason, he said, people had begun to lose confidence in him, and it was a good time to retire. Enalia's first experiences, on taking over, suggest this was only part of the problem. Tensions between villagers' and government workers' understandings of how resources should be used (paralleling those in extension covered in chapter 6) plagued relations with both Samuel and Enalia.

Social development workers were unanimous with other government workers over the aims and methods of their work. Like the extension worker in chapter 7, there was a shared view of purpose in peeling back rural ignorance and lack of initiative. At a beer party at which Samuel was present (the most senior government worker then in the village) the acting Health Assistant described him to me as being "the boss", someone "able to communicate development locally, to bring the village in contact with the nation and the world".

The "clients" of Social Development had a rather different perception of Samuel and his work. When Enalia first went around the villages trying to encourage self-help building and group farming projects, she was shown what was expected of her, if villagers were to respond, through complaints against Samuel. He was lazy, and spent his time drinking in Mabumba, whilst drawing a government salary, and he didn't come around to help people individually. Enalia argued, against this, that it was not her purpose to come and do everything for people: the government wanted them to learn how to do things for themselves in the villages. They should not fear working in groups: if they could think of group projects for themselves, she was there to consider them for grants of resources and advise on how they should be run. She put most emphasis on the self-help projects, though she would also help with women's clubs, and teach functional literacy courses, on the subject "grow more maize". A complaint was raised by a woman that the government had previously assisted with other kinds of activity, such as teaching knitting and providing some of the materials. To this Enalia responded with a concise statement of the accumulative logic she was trying to instil:

"You know there are problems in this country with high prices. The government cannot just hand out presents to you: it doesn't have enough money. So, it is encouraging the people more for developing (ukwiyantanshi) themselves through learning ways of farming which will earn money. So you see, if you earn enough money from improving your farming, you will be able to buy your own knitting materials. The whole country will be lifted up through agriculture, so you as farmers have a very important part to play."

Enalia confided to me that one of greatest problems she felt for her work was that people really did not want to work together (though she saw cooperativeness in production as the way forward). She thought the distrust over working in groups came from a misunderstanding:



that her department offered loans, rather than grants, and that people feared serious retribution (confiscation of goods or imprisonment) if they got into debt.

Discussion with villagers suggested their key problem with Enalia's method of work was indeed the insistence on cooperation; that this entailed a way of organising resource use alien to them, whilst also making their activities more visible to government representatives. They were guardedly interested in what she might have to offer, though, precisely because grants were available. There was no terminological confusion here; no failure of communication of the sort which Extension (in particular) tends to invoke to explain failures. Other inputs had been provided by Community Development in the past, but now people felt too many restrictions were operating.

The tension over understandings was perhaps most clear where the group housing projects were concerned. In Langi, a meeting was called for all those who had put their names down for group housing. Enalia began by explaining that people must get together in groups to build at least ten houses. They should be built close together, from burnt brick, and in straight lines. If this were not done, the government would not supply the locks, door frames and so forth. These statements provoked considerable argument through the rest of the meeting. The houses in Langi were scattered, and people liked to choose where to build according to the site (a good shade tree nearby, perhaps), and where other ulupwa and clan members were living. One old man in particular was adamant that he didn't want to build right next to others because there were "bad people" in the village. He was referring to distrust of working with others in

groups: he remembered being involved in a housing project some years back, in which the chosen (self-promoted) officers embezzled the funds. But Enalia would not back down; repeatedly she stressed that building must be in lines (malines), so that the village would "look nice", there would be fewer opportunities for thieves, and the government, if pleased with how people had built, would offer other facilities (she gave an example of villagers in Petauke who had been given a new well<sup>13</sup>). A woman member of UNIP chipped in at that point to say that if people did not follow Enalia's instructions a government officer would come around, learn from Enalia what had happened, and be displeased with the villagers (though she didn't clarify what this displeasure might entail). Enalia reasserted the orthodoxy of what she was there to do. It was important in current economic circumstances for people to do more for themselves, in aiding the development of the nation. The government had to lay down some rules to help people learn how best to achieve this goal.

The meeting continued with a visit to the proposed site for the new houses. The layout for rooms had been marked on the ground. Looking at one house, Enalia said it was too small according to what the government wanted, so the layout must be changed. Some of the group members had not yet decided where to build, so Enalia chose a line one side of the main road. One villager complained such a decision could not be made because the land was an area where ben muti people were living, and they weren't there to be consulted. The meeting ended with Enalia saying the group must choose a chairman, secretary

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Cf. Bratton: "In all cases the idea of village regrouping seems to have been sold to the peasants on the basis of pledges of material advantage" (1980, p. 147).

and treasurer, with whom she would liaise in future; and much heated argument among the villagers.

In comparison, the involvement of Social Development in agriculture was rather more successful. But care is needed to specify success for whom, under what circumstances.

#### Women's groups.

The general enthusiasm of women for new group activities supported by institutions can be seen as having two motivations. First, most innovations have accrued to men, and women have tended not to feel much personal benefit from the adoption of maize, except of late when there have been better chances, through Lima training, for autonomous adoption. Opportunities to gain income not subject to men's squandering were welcome. Secondly, interest in new forms of production, rather than expansion of existing women's activities, has structural origins in the differences between men's and women's work, and historical changes in agriculture<sup>14</sup>. Food crops such as cassava are laborious to grow, much more so now that "digging gardens" (fisebe) are increasingly replacing citemene, whose preparation on any scale requires considerable input from men. Capital-, rather than labour-intensive activities appeared more attractive to women.

Despite these attractions, the Kakwema womens' club had, during field work, abandoned their maize farm in favour of working with ARPT to grow vegetables on the dambo (ilungu). The opportunity to pursue a new, cash-oriented activity separately from men did not seem to

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<sup>14</sup> See chapter 4 on differences between male and female labour.

outweigh some of the objections remaining to group work, with restrictions designed to train people toward an investment ethic. It was a condition of the scheme that the group must have a bank account, and appointed signatories handle the accounts. Samuel would check that a certain percentage of profits was reinvested each year to allow expansion of production. In the end, the women reverted to running their own small maize farms, because they did not gain the easy, regular access to cash which they desired. On the vegetable project, though they still cultivated together, the product was divided equally among them at harvest, and they were then free to dispose of it at will, without any involvement in state marketing. Furthermore, a range of crops ripened at different times of the year, allowing a more or less steady cash income (as against once per year lump sums for maize; payments which were often delayed).

Two issues would seem to be involved in this change. First, the dambo enterprise was freer of the vagaries and control of state institutions. ARPT provided all the inputs, when required, and the only stricture imposed on the women was that their fresh produce be weighed by a field assistant before they disposed of it. The maize farm, in contrast, was subject to approval for loans (after the grant in the first year) by Extension representatives, and the unreliable services of LCU. Secondly, the scheme was entered specifically to provide an autonomous source of cash for women. It was bad enough that income from maize was received only once per year. The idea that much of this income had to be frozen somewhere where it could not be used was unacceptable, in an economy permanently short of cash where varied and frequent exchange of resources is the means for survival.

### Group farming.

The greatest potential success for Enalia's department lay with group farming, and in the three groups of villages she was able to visit (around Kasanga, Mpemba and Mabumba) by far the most enthusiastic response was for this scheme. This was not only to do with the economic attractions of maize farming, as she was apt to think. One of the groups, in Chipanta, had existed before intervention by her department. It consisted of ten young men, either single or with young families, some of whom had secondary education. They claimed membership was just on the basis of friendship, though six were from one clan, the rest from another, and the central members were closely related members of a Bena nkalamo matrilineage (see ch. 3). They had been taught the value of "working together" at school, seeing it as a way for all of them to expand the areas under maize, without incurring much cost (at their stage of the developmental cycle, and not having been away in urban employment, they did not have much capital to afford piece work labour).

Their method of working, though, must be distinguished from the club activities Social Development supported. Rather than having a "communal" farm, they laboured reciprocally on each other's fields. In so doing, they fulfilled the department's self-help project conditions for working together, whilst retaining individual control over fields: a compromise between productive individualism and (modified) productive communalism. What Enalia had to offer were grants of seed and fertiliser, which didn't entail the possibility of debt. As a one-off event, the grant was like an item in village exchange networks; part of a diffuse set of opportunities, not

entailing a linear set of responsibilities (as would be the case with loans from Extension) or concomitant restrictions on the future use of resources.

One might see group farming as an instance of compromise between productionist and distributionist tendencies. Whilst an element of institutional teaching had been adopted, the involvement with the institution was firmly from a distributionist stance: it represented a channel to obtain resources with no specific strings attached. Autonomy was retained by the group farmers, and they had no particular interest in maintaining a relationship with Enalia. Application for official recognition as a farming group wasn't quite what Enalia imagined, as it was only one item in a range of activities the group showed interest in. For example, they had decided to hire themselves out as a labour group. Their interest in so doing was not just to earn cash from piece work labour. They saw themselves as modern, educated, progressive farmers, and offered their services to those with relatively large and sophisticated cropping plans, earning K50 each for their first "commission"; preparing an orchard for an ARPT field assistant.

In spite of the potential for cooperation (albeit on the grounds of different understandings) in group farming, Enalia knew there would be problems in the prioritisation of resource allocation by the province. Most inputs would be given out as loans, and her department would probably receive a negligible share. Like most other field workers, she knew her whole enterprise could founder through logistical problems and economic exigencies. She was in a position of relative powerlessness, believing in the wisdom of

encouraging self-sufficiency through accumulative mechanisms of production, and dismayed at villagers' inability to see the value of cooperativeness (excepting the group farmers); as with extension workers, she tended not to question the validity of her objectives, or the methods used to achieve them. She had grown into the productionist way of thinking, aided by her Jehovah's Witness belief in self improvement. Yet, she was "stranded" as she said to me in English, because there was so little support coming from above. It was very hard to play the role of educator and exemplifier well when there were so few resources to do it with. Her enthusiasm still remained, as a young member of her department, but it was clear she might follow the cycle of gradual disillusion leading to withdrawal into self-interested activities, socialising mainly with other government workers (as happened to Samuel, and extension workers elsewhere in the province, as described in chapter 7), until or unless villagers came to follow her logic, and resource supply from institutions became more dependable.

What set her work apart from that of other departments was the focus on cooperation in production, which seems to follow from the concern in community development to pursue the tenets of president Kaunda's *Zambian Humanism* (e.g. Kaunda, 1974)<sup>15</sup>. Other departments have forsaken attempts to encourage productive communalism (the change in

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<sup>15</sup> Part of the claim to man-centredness of *Zambian Humanism* is that it draws on pre-colonial socialistic patterns of production, in which the good of the community is reckoned above the good of the individual. Many commentators point out that this idea owes more to Engels than oral histories of rural Zambia; for example Poewe "If Zambia intends socialism all efforts must be put into socializing the forces of production - not an easy task since Luapulans are extremely individualistic when it comes to production." (1981, p.16).

the organisation of cooperatives is given later as an example).

How people were responding to Enalia's early efforts illustrates two points. First, there is the contradiction between productive individualism and the insistence on communal work. Secondly, and relatedly, as with other efforts made by productionist institutions, the methods of intervention involve restricting the ways people use resources, and making them more amenable to inspection (the banking of money for Kakwema and spatial restriction in housing, are examples). It is this controlling aspect of institutions which villagers seek to resist. Historically, memories of colonial intervention colour how people respond to social development schemes, as certain patterns of control are being reiterated<sup>16</sup>. Cunnison (1959 p.116-118) records how the district commissioners tried to enforce building with Kimberley brick in linear villages, as a means to making the population more easy to administrate. Fr. Luchembe remembered colonial officials coming around the villages and making sure people were keeping them tidy. When such instructions were not obeyed, the sanctions could be severe (such as the burning of incipient settlements; see chapter 9). Villagers in Mabumba, whilst recalling some of the harshness as an indictment of colonial rule, are aware that the post-independence government has retained some administrative tools of earlier days. In Luapula, control over where and how people build villages has always been a strong element of government activity. The change in emphasis to allowing greater

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c.f. Bratton (1980, p.25) "Notwithstanding a commitment to rural development in official ideology, the African party-state may thus continue to confront the peasant in a posture reminiscent of the administrative state of the colonial period."



productive individualism seems to be acknowledging rural realities, echoing what the Roman Catholic church has done, and the activities of the primary cooperative societies. This is doubtless one reason why the group farming schemes are proving more popular than other efforts by Social Development.

### 3. The cooperative societies

My oldest informants in Mabumba could remember cooperatives run during colonial times. Nelson thought that a few people obtained some sort of loan from the colonial government as far back as the 1940s, though whether he meant locally is unclear. In the 1950s he said cooperative groups of at least ten people were formed in Luapula, each under the jurisdiction of a white man. He would supervise their work on a communal farm, and members each receive a share of the revenue. "It was mostly like being hired labour for whites", he said. "Nowadays, it is much better that people are allowed to work on their own, and obtain individual loans."

According to Quick, a small Department of Cooperatives, with some African members, was instituted in 1948 (1978, p.6), with the purpose not of improving rural living standards, but giving the government greater access to, and information about, the rural population (op. cit. p.8). Membership of a cooperative meant having to follow an extensive set of rules (especially the abandoning of citemene) as a means of encouraging people to follow government example. Failure to follow these rules resulted in penalties or expulsions (op. cit. p.9). Nelson remembered people who failed to repay loans having their furniture and other household possessions confiscated. At the same time, "the fact that marketing cooperatives kept detailed

records on crop sales increased the Government's ability to collect taxes from the farmers" (op. cit. p.8). Unsurprisingly, "rumours spread quickly throughout the country that cooperative societies were a trick to steal money from the Africans" <sup>17</sup>. This distrust of whose interests the cooperatives really served can still be detected in the ways the people of Mabumba deal with them.

In part, the post-independence drive humanistically to encourage cooperation in production was aimed at diverting attention from what had become very unpopular institutions. These new forms of cooperative performed badly, according to Quick, because of illiteracy, lack of member motivation, and unfamiliarity with communal forms of work organisation (1978, p.19), points with which I broadly agree (though they are stated too unproblematically). In 1972, a switch in emphasis was made to assisting individual farm families, Luapula province being the first to make the change, on the formation of LCU<sup>18</sup>.

#### Local cooperative societies in Mabumba.

The two primary cooperative societies in Mabumba chiefdom, Kaole and Chinkopeka are, according to Mr. Katondo, the Cooperatives Development Officer at LCU, some of the longest established and most successful in the province. Under a programme for rural mobilisation started in 1969, with assistance from SIDA and FAO, rural centres

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<sup>17</sup> Northern Rhodesia, Department of Cooperatives, Newsletter No. 21, p.3.

<sup>18</sup> Quick identifies the policy origins of this switch in the ascendancy of technocrats over humanists in government planning departments (1978, p. 4).

were founded in both places to serve emergent farmers. By 1974 LCU had taken over coordination of the activities of primary societies, and Chinkopeka and Kaole became primary cooperatives. Between then and the late 1980s membership had expanded to about five hundred for each society.

In principle, primary cooperatives were now supposed to be multipurpose, encouraging a diversity of agricultural activities which would lead, with training from LCU staff, to investment in new village infrastructure such as hammer mills, and the collective running of society farms. In practice, LCU has not offered services other than marketing, and most of its publicity has been biased toward maize. One of the local managers told me he was facing difficulties because he had been asked to go around giving "seminars" to members on the marketing of other crops; whilst on the one hand he knew he hadn't even enough bags for collecting the maize crop, and on the other, there was solid indifference from the villagers when he discussed anything but maize.<sup>19</sup>

In Katondo's terms, though, both Mabumba societies were successful: each had been able to purchase a tractor from the profits of a society farm and membership fees (share capital), and both had good records for repayments of loans: "Many people there now understand the principle of taking loans. I think that is because there are many retired miners who have good business sense. Also, Kaole and

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<sup>19</sup> Whilst the price of white maize is fixed, all other crop prices set by government are floor prices. However, LCU, as a parastatal, with its own financial interests placed first, opts to offer no more than floor prices. In practice, the food crops grown by women can be sold at much higher prices on the informal market (see chapter 5); one reason for the indifference to selling through the cooperatives.

Chinkopeka are within easy reach of Mansa so don't have too many problems with input delivery." In the past, there had been frequent problems with embezzlement of funds at the primary societies, which had made relations with the villagers bad. This had been effectively dealt with of late by a policy change: funds for marketed maize did not pass through the hands of local management but went straight to the farmer via the LCU credit supervisor.

Even in an area apparently well served by cooperatives, the "view from below" would seem to give a rather different picture. A pilot survey of cooperative use in Mabumba (Gould, 1988) indicated that the majority of those using cooperative services were not themselves members. Loan and marketing facilities were open to all; membership was thought to lead to preferential treatment in receiving inputs, and that was the main reason given for joining. Those (especially the retired miners) with much capital, could afford also to hire the tractors, both for transport of maize and ploughing, and this was proving a considerable aid to expanding production (when, that is, the tractor was functional). Most others did not want to have to find the K50 share capital (doubled in 1988), and did not trust society managers or boards of directors. Gould had found a common pattern of those running cooperatives doing so to serve personal political ends (members of a society in Milambo endorsed this view), and I gained much the same impression in Mabumba.

Attending the Kaole AGM I found most of the questioning from members concerned how society officers behaved. First, there was a complaint against the board of directors that they had failed to reproduce minutes of their recent meeting for circulation to the general

membership. Then, the manager had recently been suspended for embezzling members' share capital, so a new one had to be chosen<sup>20</sup>. One member wanted the selection procedure explained. Why couldn't the membership choose, rather than board members alone? The answer was that the board retain certain rights and privileges<sup>21</sup>. There were also complaints that managers need not have any relevant experience; merely the right paper qualifications. Contrarily, there was a feeling that the board members ought to be more educated, so that they could "communicate our wishes to the province and the nation".

The second set of complaints surrounded perennial problems with input delivery, and in response there was much mutual accusation of blame between the Kaole board and the LCU representatives from Mansa. As we saw in chapter 7, poor or incorrect delivery was a source of tension between the Extension Branch and the input suppliers, and provided a constant source of insecurity for those who tried to follow extension's instructions in maize farming.

Unsurprisingly, village response to cooperatives followed the pattern of relations with other institutions. The idea of the "common good" which people guiding coop development aimed at was foreign to the inhabitants of Mabumba. Exactly the same scenario developed as in the earlier failed attempts at group housing. Most were content to use cooperative services opportunistically, whilst simultaneously trying to gain resources through other government channels. What was

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<sup>20</sup> The ex-Zambia Airways employee mentioned in chapter 6.

<sup>21</sup> Society managers are selected by the board, whilst the latter are appointed by a general membership vote at each AGM.

so obtained might be used in the institutionally expected way, or sold, or given to others in a strategic manner, the point being that the resource, initially, is under the sole jurisdiction of the person who has procured it.

This distributionist logic is entirely different from the notion of common ownership (of profit, that is; formerly of land and product too) which being a member of a coop implies.

The holding of formal office within such an institution is the extension to a higher level of the same principle. Taking such a position gives direct personal access to alienable resources (in principle owned in common) and may be a channel to political favour with local government officials and party representatives (by passing on embezzled funds).

The response from above to these continuing problems of "misuse of funds" has been to impose ever more stringent controls, which affect both the general membership and hierarchy of the primary societies. Quick saw the general reorganisation to serving individual farm families under LCU as a move away from self-determination by members to increased subjugation to Government bureaucracy (1978, ch. 9). Specifically, in the late 1980s, representatives of LCU meet with those of other institutions, each year, to vet all loanees, checking for illegal multiple applications (the Roman Catholic church is completely independent in this respect; a further reason for its popularity as a loan giver). Katondo wants to encourage more people to attend board meetings, and there are suggestions that the Department of Marketing and Cooperatives (DMCO) be given greater powers of surveillance and intervention with the primary societies.

Likewise, Katondo sees a need to educate other provincial level government workers in principles of accounting.

Just as with extension staff and Enalia, Katondo perceived his educational goals as unquestionable aims, and the means of reaching those goals justifiable in terms of efficacy. The problems he saw with the running of cooperatives were to do with people being "slow to understand money properly", or "too tradition bound". He extended his analysis even to provincial Party officials, who, like primary society board members, could attain their positions through influence, with relatively little recourse to formal education. He had himself dealt with a particularly embarrassing situation in which the government had made an interest-free grant to LCU (interest free because they did not seek to cover administrative costs). When LCU passed on the loans to farmers, they needed to cover administration and so did charge interest. UNIP officials were furious, saying that LCU was exploiting the peasantry and undermining party activities<sup>22</sup>. To Katondo, this was simple lack of financial understanding.

#### 4. A note on the Party.

To this point in the thesis I have remained silent on the subject of the role of UNIP in Mabumba. My reason is it seems to be an extremely small one. The only general sign of Party activity was

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<sup>22</sup> It is important in this regard that Luapula was particularly active in the setting up of cooperatives immediately post-independence (Mansa district had the highest number of new cooperatives registered in the country in 1965-67; Quick, 1978, p.46). Many of these societies were founded by UNIP members who had been active in the independence struggle, and who saw the provision of government stumping subsidies to coop members as rewards for their services (op. cit. p.64). This is the historical basis for a strong role of UNIP in the running of cooperatives in the province.

occasional harassment of women by vigilantes at the chief's village market, for supposed overcharging. And late in 1987 some young men were canvassing for people to register as electors in preparation for the following year's general election. Very little of village discourse concerned the Party, and there were no signs of any active Village Productivity Committees (VPCs) which had been the cornerstone of attempts to promote rural rehabilitation in the 1970s (see Bratton, 1980, *passim*), despite the rhetoric of the Ward Chairmen. Mabumba had two of these Party officials<sup>23</sup>, who would attend all public meetings and make some speech about helping national interests, but most local people saw them as ineffectual and self-interested (along with other institution representatives) and took little notice of them. Furthermore, the WCs tended to defer to the chief and let him take the lead in public encouragement of development related activities.

The only event during field work in which UNIP featured as an active principle was a dispute over the price of Sikana wine (see Appendix 1.). Mr. Shoti, the local Branch Chairman, had suggested to other villagers that the price being charged for the wine was too high, and represented exploitation of man by man (a favourite humanist catch phrase of the president). People went to complain to the chief, who suggested the price be lowered from K1 to K0.50 per bottle. One of the wine brewers went to Shoti in a drunken rage and accused him of fomenting trouble. Shoti promptly went to the chief demanding action

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<sup>23</sup>

Ward Chairmen are expected to coordinate the activities of Party sections (the smallest administrative unit; usually about twenty-five households) and branches. Sections are usually synonymous with villages, and village headman appointed as section leaders to avoid any conflict of interest.



to be taken against this man and other wine makers, because "they have insulted the Party." This accusation the chief could not ignore, except at the cost of appearing disloyal to the administration, and thenceforward he banned the brewing of Sikana wine altogether.

The significant point is that Shoti was one of the two bar owners in the village<sup>24</sup>, and much of his trade was being lost through the expansion of wine production. One or two other prominent community members in Mabumba held offices in UNIP, who would address infrequent meetings as duties of office, but who spent no time proselytising on behalf of the Party. Sebastiano's sister Vera (see chapter 3) was notable as a senior woman of the founding lineage of Chipanta, a wife of the late chief, and a wine maker. She was additionally local women's leader for UNIP, and chairperson of the vegetable growing group at the dambo; yet her party office seemed devoid of content. She turned to me to intercede on her behalf with the chief to try to get the ban recinded, since she could not use her Party position against someone higher in the Party hierarchy.

The headman of Chipanta, as section leader, has been able to get a District Council licence to run a tea room, and to act as a retail outlet for National Wholesale and Indeco. He was enabled thereby to sell mealie meal, for which demand always exceeds supply, allowing him to consolidate his position of influence in the village.

Frequently I found him being given gifts of chickens and other

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Bratton notes in relation to political patronage that "Licences for general stores and chibuku pubs in the rural areas were awarded through the Rural Council and often afforded livelihood to those favoured by the party." (1980, p.257).

produce in exchange for reservation of bags of meal. Yet he had of late delegated his section leader responsibilities to his son, saying that he was too old and busy enough being a headman and lay preacher in the Seventh Day Gospel church. His son, in turn, explained that he was now responsible for encouraging party membership and renewing cards, but didn't want to put much effort into these tasks since "the people aren't much interested in the Party."

It was apparent in all these cases that Party membership was a strategic device for protection and promotion of personal interest (in much the same way as others getting involved in institutional schemes). None of these actors showed active, sustained interest in promoting Party ideology. Indeed, Party activism was not something Vera admired: the way vigilantes treated women at the markets (especially in Mansa) was bad, and they were mainly layabouts with nothing better to do.

I am not able to give an informed history of Party influence in Mabumba (excepting specific instances such as the suppression of Jehovah's Witnesses), but current apathy is quite striking when set beside historical accounts of Luapula province, which have it as one of the most politically active areas of Zambia in the years just before and after Independence (e.g. Quick, 1978; Bates, 1976; Gould, 1989, *passim*), strongly supporting UNIP. It seems the process Bratton identified in Kasama up to 1975 has been repeated elsewhere:

"UNIP... underwent a transition between 1961 and 1975 from a popular movement without organisation to an organisation without a popular base." (1980, p. 192).

In this chapter I have attempted to show how in the context of practical relations between formal institutions and villagers, there

remains room for distributionism to manoeuvre in relation to forms of production which are fundamentally productionist. Table 2 summarises the points.

Table 2. Productionist and distributionist strategies compared.

Productionism.

Learn to increase production gradually within nuclear family as production unit.

Intervention.

Assist farm family through loans to household head.

Provide access to oxen on basis of measured increase in maize production.

Encourage self-sufficiency by replacing grants with loans.

Set production standards; encourage adoption through restricting loans to one source per person.

Offer training courses tied to input packages.

Encourage women's clubs to run a joint enterprise to learn principles of productive investment.

Measure people's activities to show how well they have performed.

See reticence for group housing as result of confusion between grants and loans.

Distributionism.

Produce individually; enter product into social networks to ensure access to as wide a range of resources as possible.

Response.

Resources of individual increased who then controls further distribution.

Buy oxen individually; hire out or slaughter and redistribute meat.

Take whatever is offered by institutions given unreliability of input services.

Apply to as many sources as possible. Appear to achieve exemplary standards through redistribution of product.

Attend many courses, irrespective of duplication, to maximise resource access.

Abandon joint in favour of sole maize farming because benefits remote and abuse of office common. Adopt vegetable production which appears as group work but gives individual control over product.

Hide from investigation, seen as a means of social control.

Dislike group housing because a. holding productive resources in common inimical to distributionism, and b. pattern of housing required makes state inspection easier.

Distributionism can succeed in this way precisely because it uses the physical resources (as opposed to the education) of the productionist institutions in a distributive way. It is very hard for these uses to be visible to the latter, without a thorough system of monitoring. And, when such uses are discovered, from a logic of productive investment they seem wasteful, irrational and "tradition-bound", rather than adaptive to economic stress. The response is for the institutions to develop ever more sophisticated forms of monitoring. Their hold over how people may produce and use resources is growing stronger, though they have conceded the attempt to instigate productive communalism is unrealistic outside very strongly controlled environments (such as rehabilitation schemes). It remains to be seen how much the coercive aspect of productionism, together with its educational method, will come to dislodge the roots of distributionism.

## Chapter 9: The chief and Makumba.

The presentation of this thesis so far has focused at the level of the individual and the sorts of associations which individuals can form, across the social and economic range found in Mabumba in the late 1980s. In this chapter, the focus moves to the arena of politics in a more public sense; to a discussion of the role of the chief, its historical shifts, and the positioning of the current incumbent in relation to the deployment of power. It is necessary to move away from the colonialist construction of "traditional authority", but at the same time to see how a particular chief has appropriated certain new channels of power afforded by the intervention of government whilst also striving to hold onto distinctive modes of authority which might be construed as "traditional" or "customary".

The examination of power and its shifting loci is an integral part of considering social practice as discourse. The relationships between what I am calling "productionism" and "distributionism" can be seen to be playing at the level of local politics. In looking at their relations in the person and activities of the chief, and how those persons and activities are perceived more widely, some areas of contestation between the perspectives will become apparent which, in a complex way (i.e. differently for different people) affect the legitimacy of chiefly authority. The analysis will show the common perception that chiefly authority has progressively waned since the advent of colonialism to be both inaccurate and simplistic.

To discuss Ushi chiefship, especially of chiefs Mabumba and Milambo, means necessarily to introduce Makumba, an important element in local

cosmology intimately tied to the leadership and identity of the Ushi people. Power cannot be discussed in isolation from Makumba because, historically, he<sup>1</sup> has been almost coterminous with power. Philpot wrote in 1936:

"..to the Baushi the word "makumba" is now by usage almost synonymous with "power" or "paramountcy" in the same sense as "throne" in English implies "kingship". (p. 203).

Makumba must also feature in discussion of agriculture, as he has been invoked in relation to ideas of fertility and certain aspects of crop husbandry (to be detailed later): a human, moral element in agriculture which was left out of discussion in chapter 2 on agricultural production. But these associations with agriculture are specifically to do with control over activities mediated through the chief; not observances made as part of everybody's day-to-day routine. Makumba was identified, historically, with the major axis of chiefly power, and provided, as we shall see, a point of articulation in contests over power between chiefs, particularly between chiefs Mabumba and Milambo. In 1936 Philpot thought that Makumba was the subject of a "cult which is rapidly falling back before the advance of civilisation, and which will probably disappear completely within the next thirty years" (op. cit. p. 190).

Today, Makumba is a live issue in local intercourse, though one which had been in abeyance for some time. The reasons for this resurgence are to do with the activities of the current chief in relation to a long-standing dispute with chief Milambo over who should be the

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<sup>1</sup> I use the masculine pronoun in describing Makumba. When informants discussed him in Caushi they would use the third person, but the language makes no distinction by gender.

senior authority among the Ushi, and the outbreak of a serious agricultural problem. In the first part of the chapter the historical development of this dispute is traced, and the role which Makumba has played in it. Later, those government-related sources of power which are open to the chief are discussed, ending with some consideration of the ambiguous relations of these different sources of power.

#### Introducing Makumba

Makumba first appeared during field work in discussions about nutrition during the dry season. At this time of year (April-October) there is a relative dearth of fresh green leaves for making relish, and a tendency to rely on pounded and boiled cassava leaves (katapa) as the main, if not sole, leaf relish. In that particular year (1987) an order had been issued by the chief that people should stop eating katapa from August until October. This was, apparently, an instruction the chief had received from Makumba via the seer, Cilaluka. The penalty for failure to comply with the instruction would be a poor cassava harvest, resulting from mealy bug (kolela) which Makumba would otherwise unleash.

This decree was widely known throughout Mabumba, if not so widely obeyed. It was the source of argument over the appropriateness of following the chief's word and recognising Makumba precisely because it came at a time of year when compliance could mean going hungry



from time to time.<sup>2</sup> The particular events and arguments surrounding Makumba in 1987-88 will form the foreground of discussion. First, some indigenous historical background is needed to provide an interpretative context.

#### The historical relationship of Makumba and chiefship

The material presented here mixes literature sources (especially Philpot, 1936, *passim*) and oral testimony (from my field work and an earlier oral history project by two Unza students, Chanda and Yambayamba)<sup>3</sup>.

Muwe, the first recognised leader of the Ushi, discovered Makumba at Luanzanunu (in present day Zaire) before leading his followers over to Luapula. This happened around 1750. Les<sup>4</sup> spoke to him in a dream, telling him to take and guard this object/spirit, which would thereafter belong to the Ushi people. Makumba should be guarded by the chief, and be a sign of that person's authority.

Muwe settled near the Mansa river (close to the present chief

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<sup>2</sup> It has been observed by nutritionists working in Luapula (e.g. Gobeze for ARPT; Allen, *pers. com.*) that people recognise and adhere to a particular desired ratio of ubwali to umunani. When relishes are scarce, the amount of ubwali eaten is reduced in proportion. So, the nutritional detriments of relish shortages are more serious than might be expected.

<sup>3</sup> Philpot's own sources were mainly oral: interviews with various Ushi chiefs and others who had connections with Makumba at the time (1936).

<sup>4</sup> The term lesa has been in use since before colonial times, when it denoted some kind of overarching cosmological force. The interpretation of the term is difficult precisely because missionaries adopted it as the appropriate vernacular term for the Christian concept of God. It is no longer used of non-Christian beliefs.

Mabumba's), and on his death the guardianship of Makumba passed to his son, Chabala.<sup>5</sup> Through warfare Chabala extended his sphere of influence, subjugating all the peoples between the rivers Luongo and Luapula. In response to this expansionism Mwata Kazembe, paramount of the Lunda in the Luapula valley, and the most powerful chief in what is now Luapula province, launched an attack against Chabala. Chabala fled with Makumba, eventually throwing himself into the crocodile pool on the Mansa river: he disappeared beneath the waters, whilst Makumba, to the astonishment of Kazembe's men, floated on the surface. They tried to remove Makumba but failed and fled in terror.

The strength of the Ushi tribe (mutundu) continued to grow, and through growth and fission of the population the number of chiefs increased (senior chiefs progressively delegated parts of their icalo to the stewardship of younger matrilineal relatives and sons). By the nineteenth century trading routes were well established between Kazembe and Arabs working from the east coast ports, and the Ushi obtained guns, cloth and other valuable items in exchange for slaves (either enslaved peoples or miscreants from within the tribe). Around 1847 a second attack was made against them, this time by Yeke from present day Central Province and Zaire. Their motive for the attack was specifically to steal Makumba, as it was widely recognised

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<sup>5</sup> On this occasion the chiefly line transferred from Bena Mbushi (goat clan) to Bena Ngulube (wild pig clan), an example of patrilineal succession (see also chapter 3).

he was a source of power to the Ushi<sup>6</sup>. Again, the assailants found themselves unable to move Makumba.

One further attempt was made to seize Makumba, later in the nineteenth century. Swahili raiders attacked the senior chief's village, destroying it, and under torture the remaining women were forced to reveal how Makumba might bless and adopt the Swahili. They confessed that Makumba would adopt any people who sat on him. The Swahili warriors promptly did this, only to discover the next day that they had developed elephantiasis of the scrotum (lusula). Like earlier aggressors, they fled in confusion.

On the death of chief Kaboli (1877), there were no close matrilineal relatives who would be able to take on the senior chiefship; instead a distant relative from the southern part of the Ushi area was chosen. This man, Myeri-Myeri, established himself on the south side of the Lwela river, well away from the traditional "royal" homeland near the Mansa river. He took the name Milambo, indicative of his senior status (and to this day Milambo chiefdom has its headquarters in that area).

Myeri-Myeri's chiefship began successfully, and his removal of Makumba to his new "capital" was not challenged. But soon a dispute over the leadership of the Ushi, tied to the guardianship of Makumba, began. Myeri-Myeri began to lose interest in leadership, becoming lazy and unhealthy, no longer visiting the villages under his

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<sup>6</sup> Documentary evidence from the colonial period supports the idea that Makumba was of wide repute in Northeastern Rhodesia. On the occasion of being summoned to meet the Prince of Wales in Broken Hill in 1925 Mwata Kazembe stopped off in Mabumba and made offerings to Makumba (Philpot, 1936, p.204).

jurisdiction, nor bothering with the settlement of cases (imilandu). While disillusion with Myeri-Myeri grew Chama, a mwipwa of a former senior chief who had been granted a sub-chiefship, set up his village deliberately in the old "royal" area and took the name Mabumba. As Myeri-myeri became more ineffectual, people deserted his district and went to live near the new chief Mabumba.

On Myeri-Myeri's death the guardianship of Makumba and senior chiefship went to his mwipwa Nkandu, though not without considerable opposition which insisted that the chiefship should pass back to the original chiefly lineage (of which Mabumba was a member). Shortly after this controversial appointment Makumba was seized in a night raid by a minor chief of the old lineage, Nsonga (he was careful not to touch Makumba himself; his delegates perished soon after the theft).

At that point the politicking accelerated. A woman to whom Nsonga was Mwipwa, and whose own son Chinese had been passed over for the senior chiefship at the time of Myeri-Myeri's appointment (on grounds of youth) demanded that Makumba be brought to her village. This was done and she built a hut for Makumba.

The attempt by Nambulu to regain the tribal leadership for members of her own lineage was, however, only partially successful. Inevitably a dispute arose with Nkandu, and when this happened Mabumba II (yama to Nambulu) stepped in and demanded that Makumba be given into his keeping. His claim was based on his descent in the direct line of Bena Ngulube senior chiefs and residence at the focus of the tribal territory. At the same time he had the largest following of any of the Ushi chiefs, because of Myeri-Myeri's poor leadership. Myeri-

Myeri had proved himself incapable of working with Makumba, most notoriously realised in a smallpox epidemic in 1901 (attributed to Makumba's displeasure).

By this time (1904) the British Administration had arrived in Northern Rhodesia. As arbitrator Nambulu suggested the dispute be referred to the Boma. A Mr Harrington, the first British official to preside over Fort Rosebery, listened to all sides of the case and eventually decided that, as a compromise, the guardianship of Makumba should go to Mabumba, as the chief with the largest following and resident in the "spiritual" capital of Ushi land. In exchange Nkandu was to be recognised as paramount chief of the tribe, and the position of Milambo as paramount was eventually gazetted by the administration (in 1906, again in 1908).

This even-handed decision by the British did nothing to help relations between Mabumba and Milambo, not least because of the perceived necessary connection between tribal leadership and guardianship over Makumba. Discontent simmered and occasionally broke forth: on the official visit of the Prince of Wales Mabumba protested strongly that as spiritual leader of his people he should be the one to visit Broken Hill, not Milambo. For bureaucratic reasons his request had to be refused by the administration.

Little else happened regarding Makumba until 1932 when chief Mabumba died. The council of Ushi chiefs who were to choose a successor selected Fikwama, a mwipwa to the late chief. One of his strongest advocates was the then chief Milambo. Shortly thereafter Milambo visited Fikwama and an agreement was reached whereby Makumba passed back into Milambo's keeping. Older inhabitants of Mabumba in 1988

remembered this visit, and that, apparently, Makumba was taken away on the back of a bicycle. Writing at the time, Philpot saw this event as a final settlement of the dispute between Milambo and Mabumba. Events in the 1980s suggest otherwise, matters I will take up again after filling in some detail of what Makumba is supposed to be and do.

#### Effectivity of Makumba

In passing, this short historical account has referred to Makumba's role in protecting the Ushi people from outside aggression. Three particular instances have been adduced: more generally people would say<sup>7</sup> that Makumba could warn of forthcoming invasions and offer physical protection (the flesh of Ushi warriors protected by Makumba could not be penetrated by enemy spears; Chanda and Yambayamba, 1974, p.8). Later attempts at interference with Makumba came from colonialists. Many stories were told me of the dire consequences suffered by bamusungu (Europeans) who failed to respect Makumba. One story in Mabumba came from a man whose grandfather had been converted to Christianity by Doug Campbell<sup>8</sup>. The grandfather accompanied Campbell on a trip to learn about local beliefs, which brought them to Mabumba. They were given permission by the chief to visit Makumba's hut, on condition they obeyed instructions from the person who guarded it. The guardian told them they would not be able to see

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<sup>7</sup> The material presented in this section from field work was gleaned from older informants, and concerns ideas about the "traditional" place of Makumba in the life of Mabumba, rather than the recent train of events which are discussed below.

<sup>8</sup> Campbell was a noted early Protestant missionary in Luapula. See Garvey, 1974, p.233.

Makumba in any ordinary sense, and that they must not touch anything in the hut. Inside there was a form of shrine consisting of a square wooden box, surrounded by feathers, on top of which were piles of red and white beads<sup>9</sup>. Unfortunately Campbell and the other missionaries could not resist touching and dismantling the shrine, and were immediately struck down by severe fever. The guardian admonished them for their disobedience, and they had to make a variety of offerings to Makumba before he would release them from the fever.

Defending the Ushi against outside interference was only one aspect of Makumba's activity. More frequently, through the medium of the Cilaluka, he would warn of forthcoming events in the environment; typically dramatic ones such as famines, locust plagues or disease epidemics. On the positive side, Makumba could promise abundance of fish, caterpillars, game meat or other bush resources; along with good crops in the citemene fields, particularly finger millet.

"For example, if a cilaluka yelled and said "nafwa imisunga, nafwa imisunga" (this millet dust is killing me) this would imply that it was Makumba's wish that there should be a lot of millet in the fields in that particular year". (ibid.).

Whether Makumba would be helpful or not in a particular year could not be predicted; he was capricious, angry and powerful. Obtaining good from him depended on careful adherence to rituals associated

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<sup>9</sup> Philpot's description, summarising the second hand accounts available to him (very few people were reputed ever to have seen Makumba because of his close association with the senior chiefly line and ritual specialists; not commoners) is quite similar, although he talks of a black, cylindrical object, rather than a box. Philpot thought this object might likely be a piece of meteorite (p.191). It seems the object (which now appears lost) is the physical medium through which Makumba manifests himself, but is not identical with Makumba. Hence the view that after removal to Milambo Makumba was lost to the people and roamed freely, and in my anecdote, that Makumba could not be seen even though the object in the hut could.

with him, and following any instructions of the "if..then" sort.

Subsequent histories of Makumba related in Mabumba make reference to the loss of the ability of the people to work with him. It is generally held that when taken to Milambo the people there, not being acquainted with the prescribed rituals for Makumba, failed to channel his energies. Crucially, they did not know how to build the hut to house Makumba's shrine and his human "wife"<sup>10</sup> (which required that each person bring one pole and handful of clay each). On several occasions the circular thesis was presented me that Makumba could not be worked with unless housed in a definite place in a specified fashion; and that this housing could not happen unless in a general sense people were working to please Makumba.

This second point was argued as a reason why a working relationship with Makumba had not been reestablished. It was said that the chiefs had wronged Makumba (my informants; also Chanda and Yambayamba, p.8), both in the senses of ignoring ritual and personal moral failings. According to the shinganga (traditional healer), in Mabumba, a necessary requisite for working with Makumba is that a person be "righteous" (he used the English word), have no connection with witchcraft, and no moral black mark against him or her self<sup>11</sup>. No clear separation was made between the possible sources of wronging Makumba, i.e. no specific instances of moral failings were cited

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<sup>10</sup> Philpot gives an extensive list of all those associated with Makumba (1936, p. 207-208). In 1987, only the chief, shinganga and Cilaluka were mentioned to me.

<sup>11</sup> The shinganga also repeated (as in Philpot) that to work with Makumba one must be of the lineage of the Ushi senior chiefs or one of the ritual specialists (including himself in this category in what seems an unprecedented way).



against the chief, except in a putative and individualistic fashion. For example, one young man thought the current chief Mabumba was no longer able to work with Makumba because his power (amaka; also strength, fertility, potency) was too widely diffused through having three wives<sup>12</sup>. The point to be made is that the demise of the relationship with Makumba was thought of in quite diffuse terms, beyond the last significant event surrounding the shrine (its removal to Milambo in 1933).

By the 1960s Makumba had been lost to the people, and was roaming out of control in Ushi land. A comment by one informant on this situation is worth relating as it highlights the relation of Makumba to notions of Ushi identity. I have described how Makumba would make proclamations through Cilaluka. In addition, it used to be the case that people would make pleas to Makumba in times of shortage, as when rains failed. This could no longer happen, according to my informant, because of the mixing of cultures. Progressively more outsiders had moved in to the environs of Mansa, especially Bemba speakers from Northern Province. With this plurality of voices Makumba (and spirits more generally) was unable to distinguish the

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<sup>12</sup> Male potency is identified with semen; its dispersal too widely is thought to weaken a man, to debilitate him in a sense more general than sexual. Whilst some villagers claimed the ability to work with Makumba had passed to the Shinganga (see below), yet others pointed to the Shinganga's wife as the medium (she was the main administrator at Makumba Hospital and clearly a revered figure), saying, as village gossip had it, that "the shinganga's penis doesn't work."

authentic communications of the Ushi people.<sup>13</sup>

#### Reappropriation of Makumba

A series of events with Makumba as the focus began around 1984; events which, I will argue, provided an arena in which the chief could reaffirm his position as spiritual leader of the Ushi, at the same time consolidating his de facto power and reconstructing a local notion of a special identity for the people which has been progressively eroded since the 1930s. These elements in the chief's activities can be interpreted as lying within a distributionist outlook, and I will consider in greater detail the position of Makumba in relation to notions of fertility, to expand on the material presented in chapter 2. In 1984 two outstanding events occurred in Mabumba. First, the effects of the drought which had devastated parts of Ethiopia were felt in Zambia. After many years with no unusual problems reported in agriculture (the last remembered famine was before the First World War), the cassava crop was badly affected by mealy bug, a condition which can be precipitated and exacerbated when plants are severely water stressed. Soon people were finding their tubers rotten, and further to the East in Samfya district the state had eventually to intervene in the form of food

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<sup>13</sup> In a quite different context the issue of mixing of cultures was raised. It is generally recognised that "pure" or "deep" Caushi is dying out with the encroaching of central CiBemba, and indeed I recorded many instances where Ushi and Bemba words were used interchangeably (for example, cassava, tute, was sometimes referred to as kalundwe), or where older people used words which by general account were falling out of use. That young people are progressively adopting Bemba (and a sprinkling of English words) is given as a reason why they are no longer paying attention to traditional narratives (imilumbe) for instruction in correct behaviour (umucinshi; also manners, respect and comportment) which used to be told by men to their juniors in Caushi (see ch. 5).

aid<sup>14</sup>.

Later that year a shinganga arrived, with the request that he be allowed to set up his "hospital" within the chiefdom. The request was granted, and the man has gone on to become a very influential local figure.

#### The shinganga.

A signpost on the edge of Mabumba village, near to the chief's musumba, states "to Makumba hospital". This place, near the spring where some say Makumba now resides, is a circular stockaded camp with a house for the shinganga and his family, a rectangular structure where herbal medicines (umuti, sing.) are stored, a white circle<sup>15</sup> marked on the ground where patients are treated, and (in 1988) forty-two simple grass huts in which patients can stay. He was, with the chief's approval, to expand this number to ninety-five.

This was an unusually large rural centre for a traditional healer, and indeed the shinganga already had a considerable reputation in Luapula at the time he came to Mabumba. Some said his patients came from as far away as Lusaka, and even politicians would come to seek his treatment when modern hospitals failed them. He had chosen Mabumba to work in specifically because of its associations with Makumba, and the ability to work with that particular spirit would be a very powerful adjunct to his healing.

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<sup>14</sup> See chapter 5 on trade in cassava between Mabumba and Samfya district.

<sup>15</sup> Made from cassava flour.

The circumstances under which I came to discuss Makumba with the shinganga are pertinent to the interpretation in this chapter: early visits, to discuss his healing practices in general passed off unproblematically. In contrast, the proposal to discuss Makumba was met with much consternation.

Initially, worried that I might be spying and pass on what I had learned to some external authority, the shinganga demanded to know why I wanted to know about Makumba. He felt (though I learnt this indirectly) that I might be trying to steal the power of Makumba to be used by white people, or more generally the government (and here echoed the theme of earlier attempts against the Ushi). I said (following a lame anthropologist's precedent) that I merely wished to know about local customs, after which the shinganga agreed to an interview on condition I obtain a letter of permission from the chief. If I did not do so both I and my research assistant might be harmed by Makumba.

On repeating the reasons for my interest to the chief, a letter of permission was granted as follows:

"Mukwai, Paul (Philip) alaisa nakabili ati ndefwayafye kwishibafye abena Africa ifyo bondapa abantu. Eco mukwai nachilila nati alefwaya kwipusha fya kwa Makumba. Kanshi kuti mwamulondololweko. Pela mukwai,

Chief Mabumba."

*" Sir, Paul (Philip) is coming and saying 'I want to ask about the people of Africa, those people living here.' And, sir, he has gone further and says he wants to ask things about Makumba. You should explain these things to him.*

*That's all sir."*

Abel took the letter to the shinganga who was then confused because the chief had in the meantime visited him in person to say that he

must not discuss Makumba with me. Why should I be told about their customs and esoteric knowledge when I was revealing none of mine?

The outcome was a reluctant agreement to an interview where the shinganga would tell me "a little" about Makumba.

Makumba, I was told, was the most powerful local spirit (ngulu), who had great powers to heal. However, because of his capricious nature, he was very difficult to work with, and his help could not be guaranteed. The shinganga's role was to act as a kind of medium, calling Makumba to speak through the patient (in a trance state) and name the required treatment. This role, he emphasised carefully, was not the same as that of the Cilaluka, who was to work with the chief in making Makumba's wishes known to the Ushi people. Most of the other things the shinganga said I already knew from other sources, such as that when the spirit moves from place to place the ground shakes<sup>16</sup>. He then switched to emphasising a lack of separation between what he did and the work of the churches, incorporating Makumba within a panoply with the Christian God (Lesa) at the head and comparing by analogy his own role in relation to spirits with the working of the holy spirit through the virgin Mary in the conception of Christ. He closed the interview by saying it would be difficult for me to understand much about Makumba, in the same way it was for other Africans. He specifically would not discuss what it was that enabled him to work with Makumba.

In the seasons following 1984 the chief began announcing edicts from

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<sup>16</sup> Other writers describe Makumba as the source of earth tremors, e.g. Gunnison, 1959, p.221, and it is an item of common village knowledge.

Makumba concerning the consumption of katapa. This had not happened for many years.<sup>17</sup> When this matter was discussed with me, the chief said Makumba wanted people to stop eating katapa to indicate that they still respected the spirit; and that if they followed the instruction Makumba would remove the mealy bug infestation (just as the infestation had been brought about by him because of displeasure with people's behaviour). In 1986 there was also a message from Makumba that there would be plentiful relish in the bush at year's end. A few days before Christmas an elephant which had strayed from Milambo Game Management Area arrived in Mabumba. The game wardens destroyed it, and the carcass was given to the chief to distribute as he chose. This event was very well remembered in the chief's village; some people had been so eager to get the meat that they had cut each other accidentally with their axes. Even those who remained sceptical of Makumba's influence were impressed by the apparent chain of causality.

At the same time as the Christmas meat feast the prevalence of kolela had diminished significantly, adding further weight to the claims of chief and shinganga that Makumba was working in the chieftom. However, how this reestablished relationship had come about was a subject of some debate, and many cited the shinganga's presence as the crucial element. His healing powers were not disputed, except by

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<sup>17</sup> Such bans were made in the middle of the dry season, from August onward. In 1960 Kay recorded bans on cassava leaf consumption in chief Kalaba's, but as insurance via Makumba for the establishment of a healthy finger millet crop; the ban operated in December and January after sowing of the latter (1964a, p.43).

those who totally rejected traditional therapies<sup>18</sup>, and some people were showing him greater respect than the chief.

#### Compromised power

The negotiations surrounding my interview with the shinganga concerning Makumba were, I think, one manifestation of a necessarily ambiguous relationship with the chief. The presence of the shinganga was encouraging the spread of a notion that Mabumba was once more becoming the spiritual centre of the Ushi people. Yet the chief must, to preserve his own authority, retain the role of announcing Makumba's instructions from cilaluka. I, as a representative of institutions bearing resources and access to new forms of status, had also to be accommodated (Mabumba chiefdom was by 1988 receiving a disproportionate share of development resources for rural areas of the district).

On the one hand, the chief wished to be seen as patron of my work, as I might encourage the flow of more resources to the chiefdom<sup>19</sup>: to enhance his status qua traditional leader with official status on the district council. At the same time, he could not allow what was historically an esoteric source of chiefly power to be thrown widely open to external scrutiny (or at least be seen to do so). As earlier stated, the power to work with Makumba was construed as peculiar to the Ushi people, and then only to matrilineal descendants of the original senior chief (or "royal line" as Philpot calls it), the

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<sup>18</sup> Outright rejection of traditional therapy I found only among Ministry of Health workers.

<sup>19</sup> This he stated directly in a speech at an ARPT trial farmers' end of season party (see below).

cilaluka and other servants of Makumba. Many of the stories I was told by older informants concerned the dire results of outsiders (particularly whites during the colonial period) trying to learn too much.

Aside from what the shinganga may or may not have wanted to tell me of his own initiative, he was under some obligation to respect the chief's wishes, the chief possessing the sanction, ultimately, of being able to expel him from the chiefdom. The shinganga did not want to endanger his reputation which had been greatly enhanced during his stay in Mabumba. So, the overall compromise reached was that my request to question the shinganga about Makumba was not refused; yet at the same time a verbal message was sent to him by the chief telling him not to reveal anything; and later only a very limited amount. The request was complied with.

Fertility, morality, humanity and nature.

In spite of the necessarily delicate relationship between chief and shinganga over access to working with Makumba, they were unified in their presentation of his significance. Central to their discourse was the notion that Makumba's actions on the environment are responses to the conduct (mucinshi) of local people. His relation to the success or failure of crops is of particular interest in this thesis because it introduces an element in the reckoning of what contributes to good crop growth (as we shall see, both fertility and disease are implicated) which lies completely outside the methodological scope of agricultural scientists. It is an element in agricultural success which is no longer attributed in all forms of agricultural production, nor by all people. Again, its recent



resurfacing can be interpreted as an aspect of the deployment of power by the chief.

In the 1930s Philpot records among the rites performed for Makumba one for the fertility of finger millet just before sowing in November. Each year after harvest all the chiefs, and all the inhabitants of Makumba's village, would bring a small proportion of the millet harvest as an offering to Makumba. These offerings were placed in a special grain bin next to Makumba's hut. The following year the guardian chief would distribute this grain in small quantities throughout the land, for mixing with the main seed. The act of mixing would guarantee the fertility and good growth of the whole crop (1936, p.196).

Conversely, some act which displeased Makumba could lead to his making seed infertile. Thus, in the case of Kazembe's aggression against Chabala, the Mwata's seeds failed to germinate for several years thereafter until he realised the cause and made suitable obeisance to Makumba through offerings at the shrine, whereat he was given some of the seed from Makumba's bin to mix with his own (Philpot, 1936, p.194).

"It is said, however, that the practice of these fertilization rites is rapidly dying out, and at the present time only the chiefs' villages and a few of the older men from other villages bring in the annual grain offerings for Makumba".

(Op. cit., p. 196).

In chief Kalaba's village in 1960 Kay reported that some rites concerning finger millet were still performed, such as praying at a shrine to Makumba before sowing (1964 a., p.43). Younger informants in Mabumba in 1988 did not know of any such rites during their lifetimes. The only ulutambi they knew surrounding finger millet was

that it should be planted by Christmas day. Older informants remembered announcements being made by Cilaluka about dates on which crops, especially finger millet, should be planted. The Cilaluka would plant the first seed, which had been blessed by Makumba, and the village would begin planting the next day, and should finish within a week. This ulutambi apparently died out some time in the 1950s, after Makumba had been removed to Milambo and had disappeared from the control of the people. It is probably significant also that since the 1920s the amount of finger millet grown in Mabumba has steadily declined and been replaced by cassava as the major (solid) constituent of the diet.<sup>20</sup>

In the recent case of cassava mealy bug, the chief has asserted that the disaster has been occasioned by people's failure to show respect to Makumba via him. He was stressing a connection of mutual implication between the human, the natural, the moral and the physical, which can exist in harmonic or discordant relation<sup>21</sup>. This idea of connectedness, predating the arrival of government institutions in Mabumba, is in stark contrast to their separateness in Western thought. Within this frame of reference "disease" takes on implications which it does not have in the pathogen-focused

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<sup>20</sup> Finger millet is a much more difficult crop to grow than cassava. Certain people were said to be particularly adept at sowing, as well as burning the branches in such a way as to provide a good seed bed. Even then, a person who had a good millet crop one year might easily have a disaster the next, and vice versa. In contrast, until the advent of mealy bug (at which time Makumba was once more invoked), cassava had proved a very trouble free crop, so Makumba's intervention had not been required.

<sup>21</sup> By "natural" here I mean what we would describe as the non-human environment, inclusive of plants and animals, the landscape and climatic events.

paradigm of natural science, either in medicine or phytopathology. Yet the different perspectives are not irreconcilable. When people impute agency to such an epidemic as mealy bug, they may talk of Makumba as the ultimate cause; yet, with others sceptical of Makumba's influence, they recognise that the proximate cause of damage to the plants is an insect. That Makumba remains a possible interpretation of the cause of mealy bug is reinforced by institutions' manifest failure to deal with the problem<sup>22</sup>.

This is but one example of human moral and ritual conduct being understood as having environmental effects, mediated in the particular case through a spirit. The local name for mealy bug, kolela, is a Bemba variant on the English human disease name, cholera, reflecting a lack of distinction between disorders of plants and disorders of humans. Indeed, more generally moral behaviour is posited as an adjunct of human fertility and vitality. For example, it is held that women who are "loose", and go off to town in search of "boyfriends" who will provide material support, are rendered barren by their immorality. Then again, it is argued by the chief that certain disorders in children which health department staff interpret as symptoms of malnutrition are in fact the result of lack of attention to traditional ritual observances (which themselves relate to aspects of moral behaviour). An example given me by the Health Assistant concerned a dispute he once had with the chief, over the causes of symptoms he had ascribed to marasmus and kwashiorkor. In the cases in point the mother of the children had been to the

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<sup>22</sup> The Department of Agriculture had promised predator insects to attack the bug, ("banyebele pakulya kolela"; ants to eat the mealy bugs) but this programme had so far been unsuccessful.

chief's court complaining that her children's suffering was to do with the misbehaviour of her husband's second wife. The chief had advised that the junior wife be given an infusion of a particular root, and certain other medicines (miti, pl.) to be added to her food, a precaution which should have been taken when the second marriage began. Therafter, any animosity between the wives would be calmed and the senior wife's children no longer suffer. The problem, then, was that the Health Assistant's advice (that the children's condition was solely caused by diet) directly contradicted the chief's, and undermined his jural authority. The example will be referred to again when I discuss potential areas of conflict between "distributionist" and "productionist" ideas in relation to disease and fertility<sup>23</sup>.

#### Diseases of other crops

In earlier discussions of crops certain practical and conceptual schisms have been outlined: between citemene and other forms of cultivation in general; and between state-supported maize production and all else in particular. This division can be seen reiterated in notions of plant disease.

It was stated unequivocally to me that Makumba would not affect maize farms or mabala, though informants did not put forward a systematic rationale for the statement. A woman who seemed confident of Makumba's effectiveness expressed the difference between imiunda and other fields in a spatial way. Makumba would not harm his own

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<sup>23</sup> Labels such as "disease" and "fertility" are perhaps confusing. The concept I wish to convey is nearer perhaps to the term vitality; general growth and wellbeing of living elements of the environment.

homeland, this being the country around chief Mabumba's village in which all the permanent and semi-permanent fields were located. Furthermore, Makumba had never yet pronounced on maize farms. It seems reasonable to suggest a conceptual separation in which maize farming is not part of a discourse in which Makumba figures.

A number of disorders other than mealy bug were described by informants, though there was no evidence of a systematic body of indigenous technical knowledge of plant diseases. It was interesting, for example, that cassava mosaic virus, an internationally recognised serious disease of the crop, was perceived in a number of different ways. It was not described by any name in Caushi; some people identified it with kolela, others thought it of no significance; one or two said it was different from kolela, but that it indicated where kolela would strike<sup>24</sup>.

#### A new vigilance

It appears that prior to the introduction of extension and maize farming, what might alert crop protection specialists as problems in crops passed largely unnoticed in Mabumba. The environment was in balance with people; a balance occasionally disturbed by moral digressions, realised through spirit mediated effects elsewhere in the environment. Importantly, such events were major crises (famines occasioned by epidemics) in an otherwise fairly stable agroecosystem. Western agriculturalists might themselves expect a fair degree of stability in a citemene system not yet at its carrying capacity:

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<sup>24</sup> ARPT scientists felt conditions promoting spread of mealy bug were similar to those for cassava mosaic virus (water stress) and that infection by one would predispose the plant to invasion by the other.

diverse intercrops are widely recognised as being less prone to pathogen degradation than the much more genetically uniform monocrops which typify northern agriculture<sup>25</sup>. The biological fact that a crop such as hybrid maize is much more likely to suffer bad degradations than a mixture of less intensely bred crops seems to underpin yet another example of maize changing the ways Mabumba villagers conceptualise agriculture.

The attitudes to maize; that it requires precision, discipline and hard work, as described in earlier chapters, are reflected in an obsessive vigilance for imperfections in the crop among maize growers.

To date, with a quite short history in Mabumba, cash maize has been relatively free from pests and diseases, and there has been no empirical evidence (as collected by ARPT) to suggest economic damage caused by such agents. Two pests are quite widely reported; mfumbafumba (maize stalk borer) and finsenda (not identified). The latter is described as a kind of worm which lives in the soil, attacking maize roots and causing the stems to dry out. Individual farmers have noted that mfumbafumba was prevalent when plants were one metre high. Maize streak virus was also recognised by many, but hadn't yet been given a local name. It has been observed affecting one particular variety more than others (hybrid SR52), and to have reduced grain numbers to some degree. People have been told by extensionists that problems like mfumbafumba (internationally recognised as a potentially serious pest) can be treated by

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<sup>25</sup> Hence intercrops are a major focus of interest in research on Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

"medicines" (pesticides and fungicides as appropriate), and there is a constant stream of requests coming to the Agricultural Assistants, which they rarely can respond to. A certain quantity of agrochemicals does, however, get through to the villages, especially into the hands of large maize farmers, and the treatments have been seen to be effective.

With the force of rhetoric encouraging a strive toward the perfect product, and knowing that effective "medicines" are available, many maize growers now inspect their crops for even the smallest blemishes, and, paradoxically, demand assistance for problems which lie outside the scope of most Department of Agriculture staff either to diagnose or to treat; or which are not in themselves an economic threat to the crop. Thus the example in chapter 7 of maize farmers asked to look for problems in a Lima farmer's fields. At least twenty crop abnormalities were identified by the farmers, most of which the extension staff could not comment on. The very attitude being inculcated in the farmers had gone beyond the limits intended by extension and led them to be frustrated yet again by institutional incapacity (along with input delivery delays, etc.).

#### The relations of different discourses of fertility.

If examined by an agriculturalist, the cassava crops around Mabumba would reveal as many "abnormalities" as the maize crops; yet, because of the different perspectives from which each crop is viewed, these latter have not been paid much attention in the past. However, I would tentatively suggest that the productionist discourse of maize is beginning to gain ground with respect to diseases of other crops. Among maize growers (who are, by default, always connected with

cassava production also) I found evidence of an increasing tendency to look for irregularities in the cassava crop and put forward alternative, individualistic rationales for the origin and possible treatment of disorders. A notable example concerned kolela, where a man suggested an explanation for the pathology and treatment of mealy bug which at the same time supported the chief's instruction to cease or minimise eating of katapa, though through a "naturalistic" rather than "supernaturalistic" frame of reference.<sup>26</sup>

According to George, the kolela pests enter the plant through the leaves, then spread down through the branches into the roots, eventually reaching the tubers whose growth they stunt, or cause to rot (ukubola). If the infected leaves are removed, the sun can better penetrate the branches, "cooking" the pests and preventing them from reaching the tubers. But, at the same time, the healthy leaves (those desirable as relish) should be left on the plant, otherwise the tubers cannot develop. This, George felt, was the real reason the chief did not want people to eat katapa, but that people used only to citemene could not understand such a rationale, hence the chief's resorting to a traditional explanation.

Despite reinterpreting the chief's instruction in a naturalistic way, George would not himself eat katapa for a different reason. The spirit of his dead father had spoken to him in a dream and said that he would suffer if he ate katapa. So, the possibility of spirit mediated instruction remained open to George, though significantly

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<sup>26</sup> Such terminology needs careful specification. I am using supernaturalistic to denote that Makumba is neither fully identified with the human world, nor with the non-human environment, but seen to act as some kind of mediating agent between the two.



this was outside the context of general edicts to the people from the chief concerning Makumba and agricultural practice. At the time of writing it seems more generally that Makumba remains a possible way for the people of Mabumba to impute agency behind mealy bug attacks; and generally that human mucinshi has connections with events in the wider environment. Which kind of interpretation people use devolves from education and experience, one major locus of these influences being maize cash cropping: when cassava diseases were discussed with non maize growers no one offered an explanation of George's sort.

Only in three cases did I find absolute disbelief in Makumba: two were secondary school leavers who had learnt that Makumba was "just mythical", and thought that no empirical evidence in village life suggested otherwise. The third was an older maize farmer who suspected the shinganga's attachment to Makumba as merely an advertising technique. The wider attitude was of skeptical open-mindedness, even among those with secondary education who were maize growers. At the least Makumba was of interest as part of local custom (ulutambi) and the manoeuvrings of chief and shinganga were followed with interest. Among those most supportive of Makumba the news was spreading that the reestablished relationship was at last to be cemented by the building of a new shrine in Mabumba, thus literally and metaphorically bringing the spirit home.

#### The chief and other sources of power.

The events surrounding Makumba during field work represented only one area in which chief Mabumba appeared to be trying to consolidate his de facto power. Since the colonial period of indirect rule, Zambian chiefs have been incorporated within the national government system;

it is this role within government, and more generally in relation to government institutions which now requires examination. In other words, I shall map the relationship between chief Mabumba and sources of power connected with productionist institutions.

As we saw, the chief's role vis à vis Makumba concerned control of behaviour relating to the bush and imiunda (not to eat katapa, or go hunting or fishing, at specific times of year). In contrast, the role provided for in relation to government institutions can be interpreted as control over the spatial deployment of people, allowing for greater ease of monitoring and surveying their activities. This role has an historical precedent from the colonial period, and its latest manifestation would appear to draw on the spatial fixity required of maize farming.

Kay, looking at Ushi settlement history, considered that prior to European intervention Ushi chiefs had little de facto power; chiefs' accounts tended to "furnish a general picture of how the tribe became a loose association of relatively independent groups because of the sub-divisions with an increasing number of chiefs and the political weakness of the senior chiefs, who were spiritual leaders and keepers of the tribal god (Makumba) rather than effective overlords" (1964 b, p.239).

In the period before 1900 any man could move to a new area and become mwine mpanga, but such areas were not clearly defined and could better be understood as spheres of influence rather than territorial units. Such areas were variously denoted cipande, cipataulwa,

citente<sup>27</sup> or mutala. By 1905 there were some twenty-seven Ushi chiefs and four hundred and thirty-six villages, and to discourage further fission the colonial government<sup>28</sup> demarcated chiefs' areas so that the whole of Ushi land was allocated to one chief or another. In the following year the establishment of embryonic settlements (insakwi) was banned. This move was intended to allow greater control over the population by the government, but at the same time certain chiefs' private interests were served. An early note in the Fort Rosebery District Notebook records insakwi as one of the chiefs' main grievances: "Heads of families having no standing leaving their proper villages against the order of their chiefs and hiding themselves away in the bush in wretched grass shelters which they gradually make into villages and call themselves headmen and independent of their chiefs. (This causes endless trouble, especially in collecting the Hut Tax). The men who do this are usually old men with several daughters, and with these they are able to get some young fellows to follow them". (Quoted in Kay, 1964 b, p.242).

There followed a period until Indirect Rule in 1930 of quite brutal amalgamation of villages, in which chiefs who had been territorially favoured by the government sanctions collaborated in the burning of insakwi.

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<sup>27</sup> In modern usage citente refers to a section of a large village which though formerly defined by a group of kin is now an administrative division used by UNIP for village level political organisation.

<sup>28</sup> At that time Northern Rhodesia was under the jurisdiction of the British South Africa Company (BSA), followed by annexation by the Crown in 1924.

"Chief Kalaba is a very good chief. Since his people have been collected into fewer villages he has done his best to get them to pay tax. In December (1906) he complained some of his people had again built insakwi away in the bush. Sent him messengers to burn them, which he did, and brought the people before me."

(Fort Rosebery District Notebook, quoted in Kay, 1964 b, p.246).

On the introduction of Indirect Rule, the number of Ushi chiefdoms was reduced to ten (as is the case today), with Nsonga merged into Mabumba. Now that the chiefs had more autonomy, the larger villages which had been enforced by the government dispersed again to some degree. In Mabumba itself there were eighteen villages in 1905. From then until 1930 the number remained fairly constant (rising to twenty-five), but by 1960 the figure had increased to ninety (op. cit. p.239). Writing in the 1930s Phillips stated:

"From the native point of view there are neither social nor economic advantages in (large villages). A single native family is, in food production and domestic management, a self-supporting whole.....there is at present a gradual process towards decentralization which plainly shows that the village unit is to a great extent an artificial and not a natural division.....without doubt the government regulation is the only force which restrains the whole community from breaking up into single groups living by themselves under an elder."

(op. cit., p.246).

In 1988 the number of villages in the chiefdom had considerably lessened<sup>29</sup>, mostly along the Mansa-Samfya road. A government official who had also worked in Milambo was struck by how much more scattered the population had been there. Undoubtedly a number of factors have encouraged this grouping: government schemes have been concentrated at certain nuclei; maize farming can in the short term be spatially fixed, and is encouraged to be so by dependence on

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A personal estimate for 1988 is seventy villages in the chiefdom, some ten of which are small peri-urban settlements around Mansa, i.e. a decrease of one third compared with 1960. This has to be set against an overall increase in population in Mansa District of 27 per cent between 1963 and 1980 (Republic of Zambia, 1987).

government infrastructure; an increasing and universal need for cash promoting living near major highways where products can be sold to travellers. However, these are all general processes, and here the focus is to be which processes a particular chief has encouraged and why.

Between 1964 and 1974, village regrouping was the cornerstone of the ideology of rural development in Zambia. Though the apparatus through which this purpose was to be achieved was officially local level Party and government organisations (Ward Development Committees, Village Productivity Committees, etc), Bratton found in Northern Province that "often the chiefs acted alone, perceiving concentrated settlements as a means of boosting their own following at the expense of local party leaders" and "Historically, chiefs enjoyed a prerogative of allowing settlements in their own areas, and during mobilisation for regrouping reasserted their interest in this aspect of rural life" (op. cit., p.150).

Chief Mabumba has exemplified Bratton's observations, throughout the chieftdom but with his village as the focus.

Alone among the Ushi chiefs, Mabumba has some degree of formal education and can speak and write English. As such, he was chosen to represent the other chiefs on the District council, over and above the senior chief, Milambo.

During the 1970s Mabumba enforced the amalgamation of several smaller villages with larger ones along the main roads. In 1972 Chapa was asked to join Yasakwa, and the old village was abandoned (see map 2, appendix 4). Similarly, in 1977 four small villages neighbouring

Chisongo were incorporated, with the headmen being reduced in status to section leaders<sup>30</sup>. These amalgamations had been encouraged by the chief with promises of government services: wells, clinics and schools. When talking to me the chief explained that as long as the population remained scattered, the government could not effectively supply these services to the people. At the same time, many of those who had been forced to move expressed the opinion that it was a way of making them more accessible to chiefly scrutiny, particularly during his annual chiefdom tours<sup>31</sup>.

Against the general background of a move toward village regrouping, chief Mabumba has improvised other means by which his authority can be directly felt, which draw on processes encouraged by government institutions; and improve his standing in the eyes of those institutions. Fortuitously, the regional research station of the Department of Agriculture was situated within the chiefdom, so when ARPT first began work, with few resources, they chose Mabumba as a research area on logistical grounds. A cooperative relationship was soon established with the chief, news of which spread to other parties interested in rural development, such as donors supporting the Department of Health, and Mansa Rotarians. During field work SIDA had started to supply drugs to Mabumba clinic and a new pilot

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<sup>30</sup> A section leader being the caretaker of the smallest unit defined for administration by the government, but, unlike a headman, not allowed to adjudicate village cases or allocate land. Being made a section leader was definitely seen by ex-headmen in Mabumba as a demotion.

<sup>31</sup> During the agriculturally slackest time of the year (August) chief Mabumba tours most of the villages in his chiefdom to address the people and assess their productive activities. This is a personal habit which follows traditions of tours of inspection by government officials dating from colonial times.

centre was soon to be opened by them; the Rotarians were to provide new wells; and various funds were being made available to upgrade the Basic Secondary School. A point had been reached at which government staff in Mansa were feeling that Mabumba was receiving a disproportionate amount of the District's development resources. Chief Mabumba had no qualms over this.

"People from 'Research' are even thanking us now for the good job we are doing here (reference to vote of thanks from ARPT staff). If you continue to cooperate in the same way, even more projects will be brought to us. When ARPT first came to Mabumba, not many of us wanted to be trial farmers. But as we saw the benefits of these developments in the good crops which Ba Chanda (ARPT Trials Assistant) grew, and we learnt how to do the same, the interest grew. Now maybe three quarters of the people, especially in Mabumba itself, are very keen to be recruited for ARPT surveys and trials. So, in future, even more good things shall come to us.

We never used to have Europeans staying in the village (reference to me); their presence also shows that good developments are happening here. People should be friendly to the European. I hope that even more projects will come from ARPT in future, so that even better harvests will be achieved. We have learnt much; in future we would like more and different kinds of trials.

I remind you again that you should cease cutting citemene because there are not enough trees. You should concentrate on permanent gardens (mabala) and grow more maize as it is the way to develop and grow richer."

(Extract from speech by chief Mabumba to ARPT trial farmers at the end of season party, 1987. Translated from CiBemba).

In speeches such as this, chief Mabumba appealed to villagers' distributionist sensibilities (if you comply, there will be more resources of different types for you), whilst simultaneously furthering his own interests through productionist means. In other words, he was able to manipulate the two sorts of perspective, as Andrea was seen to do in chapter 8.

It may not immediately be obvious where productionism figured in his rhetoric: it was in the association of encouraging new institution-

led permanent agricultural methods with denigration of citemene. With increasing distances to citemene, many people were giving up the practice (mentioned in various other chapters), especially the formally educated. However, several men not caught up in maize production who wished to maintain large imiunda and establish themselves as heads of autonomous communities were wanting to remove themselves completely and set up hamlets in the remote bush areas, echoing the establishment of insakwi earlier in the century. Some succeeded in doing this; on bush trips I found the occasional small hamlet of pole and dagga houses where people were growing all their crops in citemene. Yet in cases where the chief discovered people attempting to leave the main villages in this way, he applied punitive sanctions<sup>32</sup>. In one case during field work a small group of matrilineally related men who planned leaving the chief's village for this purpose were set to work cultivating his maize farm as punishment. In another, a man who sought to remove himself with his wife and children (and had begun to build a new house in the bush) was ordered to pay a cash fine through the chief's court. Though the chief articulated the reasons for these punishments in terms of encouraging new, progressive farming methods, the sub-text, stated to me by a variety of informants, was that he did not want people removing to the remote bush where he could have no influence over them.

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<sup>32</sup> This must be contrasted with those who sought to establish separate hamlets in search of new land for extensive maize cultivation. This practice the chief approved. Additionally, though he banned the building of pole-and-dagga houses in the main villages (in favour of burnt brick, a sanction originating with the colonial government), he paid little attention to how people built in remote areas, appearances to the outside world seeming the important consideration.



### Population movement in the 1980s

The effect of this amalgamation of population has been to increase pressure on land locally, to the extent by the early 1980s that some degree of dispersal became unavoidable. In the most pressured areas, where land disputes concerning maize farms were proliferating, the chief achieved this aim in a carefully controlled manner. For example, by 1983 the pressure on land around the previously amalgamated village of Yasakwa had become accute, so he encouraged the resettlement of Chapa village. He encouraged young, unmarried or newly married men to open maize farms there. Between 1972 and 1983 some farms had been maintained, whilst the owners travelled daily from Yasakwa. From 1983 the headman established himself again in Chapa; and by 1988 the young maize farmers had started to rebuild houses. A new settlement had been established, but very different from the bush insakwi. This was a small nuclear village surrounded by maize fields on a plain bordering a dambo. There was no woodland cultivation. All the farmers were young men who saw their village as a model of the new farming; indeed Chapa approximated the state model of what prosperous rural life should be.

Whilst these controls on population have been closely tied to the encouragement of maize farming, chief Mabumba has also been strict about food production. He has stressed the importance of people being able to feed themselves (albeit not from citemene fields), and that only the "rich", who can buy their food, should grow maize alone. He discourages the sale of large quantities of groundnuts and beans to banakungula, travelling middlemen who transport village goods to the Copperbelt towns, again applying sanctions when cases

come to his attention. The Health Assistant in Mabumba was of the opinion that the relatively better nutritional status of people in Mabumba, compared with Milambo, could be attributed to the chief's strictness on this issue: Milambo, bordering the Zairean pedicle (the quickest route to the Copperbelt), is noted for brisk and heavy trade with banakungula. He saw chief Mabumba as the most progressive among the Ushi chiefs where development issues were concerned, and indeed the level of interest shown in Mabumba by development institutions was in part a function of the willingness of the chief to cooperate.

A celebration was planned by the chief to happen shortly after I left the field; it was to be a review of achievements in Mabumba during his twenty-one years as chief. All headmen and villagers in the chiefdom were to be invited; but also representatives of government institutions. Truly, he seemed a man with a mission, seeking recognition as the most important and progressive among the Ushi chiefs, yet also trying to regain the status of spiritual leader of the Ushi by invoking the special relationship with Makumba. I have indicated a quite successful merging of the two aims. Yet productionist and distributionist understandings of the environment stem from quite different premises, and potentially are in conflict. I end this chapter with some comment on where and how such conflict can arise.

#### Sources of tension.

In a case described earlier, a woman brought her sick children to the chief's court, claiming their suffering was due to the influence of her husband's second wife. This causal explanation the chief upheld,

whilst the Health Assistant directly contradicted it, saying the children were just poorly nourished (and, specifically, that the second wife was irrelevant). The chief's response in this instance was to reprimand the Health Assistant, saying that as an outsider (from Eastern Province) he did not properly understand local customs. The "wronged" party, a woman having no formal education, decided to accept the chief's word, but clearly such cases entail the possibility of denying his authority, depending on which interpretation is likely to prevail.

In agriculture, I did not detect any overt contradictions between the chief's encouragement of maize production and his proclamations from Makumba. I think the possibilities for contradiction, at least so far, are small, precisely because the institutional drive in agriculture surrounds a crop and set of practices which are in a conceptual and practical sense separate from the rest of village agriculture: Makumba simply hasn't mentioned maize farms, and isn't expected to. Maize farming is cleaved from the associations of citemene, and institutions have been indifferent to the practice, or have dismissed it until very recently as bad and attempted to ban it wholesale, rather than subject it to "scientific" analysis<sup>33</sup>. In contrast, the potential for conflict in health is much greater, since traditional healing makes claims to treat the same empirical

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<sup>33</sup> The colonial government attempted to ban citemene in 1905, specifically by preventing the establishment of mitanda, temporary bush shelters used during the planting season. The edict was based both on an assumption that citemene was agriculturally backward, and a wish to keep a taxable male population visible. See Moore and Vaughan, 1987, who conclude that the invisibility of much indigenous agricultural practice devolved from a colonial obsession with shifting cultivation and its evils.

conditions as modern medicine, and there is some division (though not an absolute one) between those who place faith in the former or the latter.

### Summary

In this chapter I have dealt with what usually would come under the heading "village politics". I have examined the role of chiefship, and considered the activities of one chief, not under the headings "traditional" and "modern", but as the exercise of authority through frameworks which can be described as distributionist and productionist. In the distributionist frame I have referred to Makumba, an important element in Ushi cosmology, revived in a particular context in the 1980s, that context being the outbreak of a devastating disease of cassava (a crop usually little affected by the degradations of other organisms). In describing the events surrounding kolela I have emphasised that in distributionist thinking humans and other living organisms, "moral" behaviour and health, are all seen as linked in a way alien to Western thought. Though the proximate causes of plant diseases are often recognised, ultimate causes are seen as residing elsewhere.

In terms both of crop diseases and chiefly authority I have shown how the productionist frame is much more to do directly with surveillance, in which the individual is a discrete agent of control (the watchful farmer diagnosing crop problems to refer to extension; the chief grouping the population to make them more amenable to his scrutiny); rather than part of a more diffuse net of causality.

Finally, I have indicated the ways in which the two frameworks are

antagonistic or complementary. There is potential for conflict where two sets of interpretation are mutually contradictory, as may be the case with certain human disorders. However, in agriculture, the exotic nature of the cash maize crop seems to keep it bracketed from being looked at in terms applied to other crops. Distributionism does not force particular orthodox views, so it is possible to accept a different form of causality for maize; for most people in Mabumba both frameworks for understanding crop health, and accepting chiefly authority, remain open. It is only those most fully part of the formal education system who outrightly reject the claims for multiple causes made by distributionism.

## Chapter 10. Conclusions: prospects for agricultural development.

The questions posed at the beginning of this thesis must now be answered: does a discourse analysis, in a Foucauldian sense, shed new light on the processes of rural development? And can discourse be said to provide an interpretative framework which is more than theoretical window dressing? In answer I must summarise the findings of earlier chapters.

My point of departure will be a reevaluation of the descriptive terms "productionist" and "distributionist" as coined in the text. Having elaborated what these have meant in substantive and theoretical terms I will proceed with their application to some of the secondary questions which have arisen: what new can be said of processes of socioeconomic differentiation and class formation, and of analytical categories such as the "household"?

### Distributionism

I used the term distributionist to capture a sense of how Mabumba villagers conceive and organise agricultural production; starting from the observation, made by other observers (Gould, 1987; Poewe, 1981) that to understand local political economy in Luapula requires a focus as much on distributive (i.e. consumption) as on productive processes, which I have taken further in chapter 4 to insist on the need to understand resonances between them.

I have amplified this observation to characterise a logic of economic behaviour in the village: that it is about the maintenance of a multiplicity of channels of access to resources, grounded in the

expectations of local kinship, relatively few and inclusive categories of kin allowing for many potential avenues for the pursuit of resources.

In later chapters this economic label for "distributionism" has spread amoeba-like into other areas. I have shifted my ground to seeing distributionism as a set of harmonic relations; of small checks and balances going beyond the economic. Whilst economic and social relations between people are developed on series of claims and counter claims, crop performance, the "natural" environment more generally, and people's behaviour are deemed to be linked. A failure or success in one sphere will be echoed by events in another (ch. 9). Thus my definition has moved to encompass elements of what might be called a Mabumba cosmology.

In a sense this straining of definition merely reflects a common finding in anthropology: that our analytical concepts of politics, economics, causality and so forth are too constraining of ethnographic reality, if not positively misleading. But the apparent unrigorous nature of my term "distributionist" also says something of importance for a discourse analysis.

"Distributionism" is about choice, and freedom of choice, grounded in a kin-based polity which allows of varied association. People move between different economic activities in a very fluid and, to Western eyes, confusing way. Someone might opportunistically try some maize farming this year, fish trading next; dig some wells in the dry season and go to hunt an elephant. Agricultural production in Mabumba, beyond obtaining basic subsistence requirements is (anticipating a contrast with sustained maize farming) quite

unconstraining. Growing food is something everyone is involved in; yet there is no sense in which farming is a career, an identity, an aspect of village life clearly differentiated. Village agriculture is not conceptualised as a set of highly specified practices which all producers must try to follow. Indeed, as we saw in chapter 2, much of the "technical" knowledge of agriculture in Mabumba is quite individualistic. Thus "distributionism" can be no more than loosely defined, since it is not about specification or control of behaviours in a unified way. In Foucault's terms, "distributionism" is not a discourse. The nearest it comes to being so is in the case of Makumba, chief Mabumba and the eating of katapa (ch. 9). But that is only a limited case, and, as we have seen, an interpretation of events which is now fairly open to contestation.

#### Maize farming: a putting into discourse of agriculture?

With the exception of those few retired miners who set themselves up as balimi bakalamba from the 1960s onwards, the majority of maize growers in Mabumba have become so over the past ten years, directly or indirectly through contact with school education, the primary cooperative societies, the extension service and special schemes such as Lima and church clubs. For most of these people maize farming came as something new, dependent on resources and services provided by formal institutions. An empirical dividing line can thus be drawn between institutionally supported maize growing, and other areas of village agriculture, and I have organised my analysis around this division.

Previous studies have tended to articulate this focus in terms of dualisms such as capitalist vs. non-capitalist production; money vs.



subsistence economy; rural vs. urban interests, etc. My approach rather has been to arrive inductively at meanings which attach to the division. Is the adoption of cash maize cropping more than an economic act of the free willing subject? Those wishing to promote actor-oriented analyses of rural development have been quick to indicate how villagers may unpack the resource units supplied by agencies to suit their own ends (e.g. Olivier de Sardan, 1985, p.222), as I also have done in chapters 5 and 8; yet this is to gloss over how new forms of production may have ideological connotations and potential for social control.

To unpack the meanings of new production forms requires a summary of where I have arrived with the term "productionism". It is clear that institutions are trying to encourage a particular logic of resource use: that villagers should produce more of certain crops which will aid national food security and generate cash in the rural areas. This might be labelled a capitalist logic: expansion of production to generate surplus for reinvestment in production.

Institutions assess rural production through production levels, and use the same benchmarks to assess their own influence on agriculture. Thus in chapter 7 I have argued that hybrid and composite maize provide a convenient vehicle for intervention because their production is eminently quantifiable<sup>1</sup>. Quantification then becomes very much more than an abstract principle. In looking at extension, I showed how the idea of quantification has come to form the basis

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<sup>1</sup> And because local ways of growing other crops are much less uniform, their accessibility to the scrutiny of formal institutions is limited.

for qualitative judgements about the producer. Using precise measurements of yields from given land areas, people (young, educated men in particular) are beginning to make judgements of each others' competence as "farmers". In a sense they have internalised some of the categorisations produced by institutions ("peasant" and "emergent" farmers, etc.) to reevaluate themselves in senses which take them beyond the rural periphery into the world of development and education.

Importantly, to be the right kind of producer requires discipline in the following of the strict procedures laid down in maize education: to be a good farmer is seen to require specific training, and the initiated control carefully whom they introduce to the "enlightened" form of production. There are also those who begin farming by trial and error, but the precise agroecological requirements of the crop often render haphazard efforts unsuccessful; a matter for scorn among educated mafarmers. Extension schemes such as Lima have allowed some villagers to take on the role of teacher, which has meant they can assert a form of status, in relation to maize growing, formerly attributed only to government workers. Furthermore, such schemes have opened up the possibility of "progressive" status to those without secondary education.

I have further argued that this disciplinary attitude underpins some patterns of the use of labour; that the work applied to maize can be very precisely assessed and should be rewarded through a digitally quantifiable medium (money or commodities). Likewise, it is also detectable in a new approach to plant disease, as illustrated in chapters 7 and 9. The idea of minute inspection has been encouraged

by extension, such that farmers look for imperfections in an unprecedented way; yet, paradoxically, the new vigilance exceeds the ability of the government institutions to respond.

Allied with quantification, institutions expect that resources will be used in linear progressions, to ensure the generation of surplus. The rationale that maize growing is a process from inputs to outputs entails restrictions on how resources can be deployed compared with the much freer, distributive uses I have illustrated in chapters 5 and 8. Failure in the success of schemes, as assessed through quantitative measures, has brought the imposition of tighter measures to inculcate the "right" attitude to resource use. This is most clear for extensioners' role in relation to credit. For a new maize grower, land must first be demarcated by an Agricultural Assistant, who will then specify the appropriate amount of seed and fertiliser to be obtained. At the other end of the season, the farmer has the input credit deducted from his maize receipts at source, making it difficult to divert the inputs (at least a high proportion of them) away from the maize "enterprise". Critically, the very fact of quantification makes it easy for the external observer to assess the reliability of the producer.

Measurability creates a mode for surveillance, and surveillance of Mabumba agriculture is tending toward greater complexity.

Simultaneously, institutions can see more closely what villagers are doing, and have the means to apply more restrictions to any apparent waywardness in resource use. This propensity for surveillance, like the fact of quantification, has been internalised by maize growers in the way they look at their own crops (vigilance for disease), and,

where they take on a teacher role as contact or Lima farmers, in justifying their passing judgement on how others are farming.

All this points to the need to conceptualise cash maize production in Mabumba as being very much more than a new economic enterprise. But does it approximate a discursive unity in the Foucauldian sense set out in my introduction? If so, it must be possible to demonstrate a system of relations between institutions, individuals, concepts and practices in which knowledge and power are reciprocally constituted.

First, entering maize production means for most Mabumba villagers some degree of dependence on external institutions. For the majority of growers the drive to enter production was economic expediency: increasing needs for cash with few opportunities in the village to generate more than paltry sums. With little or no initial capital there is economic dependence on government credit services for all but the balimi bakalamba<sup>2</sup>. And for all producers, there is technical dependence on such services because of the biological nature of the high yielding maize varieties. Zamseed produces the hybrid and composite seed which they must obtain through the primary cooperative societies; the same applies to obtaining indispensable inorganic fertilisers. For many, approval to obtain these inputs is needed from the extension staff, approval which depends on assessment of the likely success of the farmer.

Such dependence may be defined as material, not discursive; as also is the need for strict attention to spatially and temporally defined

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<sup>2</sup> As I have illustrated, such dependence may be direct or indirect, villagers using distributionist rationales to obtain resources via others, if they cannot gain them directly from the institutions.

management practices if a good harvest is to be achieved (especially in the case of hybrid varieties). The requirement for external services has also underpinned the relative concentration of maize farming around certain nuclei which, as we have seen in chapter nine, has helped the chief in his efforts to keep his subject population consolidated, and thus easily overseen.

However, the principal of quantification, common to all the formal institutions, is more than a simple yardstick. Quantification translates into procedures and standards which producers subjectively apply to themselves and their activities, as already noted. The forms of labour applied to maize and their rewards can be seen as partly determined by this new set of values; one cannot, for example, explain the proscription of beer as payment for labour on maize farms purely in material terms, such as the dearth of finger millet in the 1980s (ch. 4). An apparently neutral tool (linear quantification), deployed through government institutions, has effects on people's conceptualisations of labour, which in turn have material consequences for how labour is organised. Secondly, the concepts and procedures are beginning to take effect in areas of production other than maize cash cropping. For example, lima ropes are being used to demarcate cassava fields, and comparisons of yield made (ch. 6)<sup>3</sup>. More complexly, existing agricultural practices are being reconceptualised in the terms used by development institutions: we saw in chapter 2 how a female farmer had come to interpret the

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that comparisons of quantities of crops have always been a source of personal comparison, but that a quantum shift has occurred with the introduction of maize in that the new sense of quantification is linear and digital, i.e. allowing of very precise comparisons.

combined pattern of her maize and other crop fields in terms of the spatially and temporally bounded rotations beloved of extension.

It is precisely the connection between institutions, modes of investigation, concepts and practices which make maize farming in Mabumba look very like Foucauldian discourse, especially since this constellation has been shown to provide the means through which new ideas enter the currency of local thought. To be a maize farmer is to be a new sort of person; farming is becoming a career, dependent on certain material connections, mediated through new means of assessing production and the producer. Quantification provides the apparatus through which these connections can be established. Fr. Luchembe's words echo a common sentiment among maize farmers:

"People have learned that they didn't used to know how to use the land adequately to gain a living" (ch. 8). It is almost as if what Mabumba villagers have always done is not agriculture at all. The discourse of maize has produced the object of which it speaks: the "rational" farmer. But this statement needs qualification, as it appears to give an overdeterminate status to discourse.

What I wish to argue, like Foucault for sexuality, is that a process of mis en discours is happening through the introduction of maize farming, which is far from complete or uniform. The directions of the new discursive influence I have examined, without conclusive statements about such issues as economic differentiation or class formation. Having surmised that there is a discourse of maize production, I must now devote some time to these issues. The discussion will be aimed at two areas. First, how economic differentiation, the household, etc. are treated in the

anthropological/sociological literature. Secondly, the practical consequences for development institutions of the way they currently theorise rural society. In other words, to review the status of certain analytical concepts from a discourse perspective, moving from the wider field of social science research on rural economies to the concrete example of Mabumba, with particular reference to the work of ARPT. In a sense this is to follow Long and van der Ploeg who call for a problematising of the relationship between theoretical models of agrarian change, and policy models of how to promote development (1989, p.226).

Households and economic differentiation: category and process.

A continuing debate for students of agrarian change has concerned the status which should be ascribed "household" as an analytical concept. Reviewing the use of household and community in African studies, Guyer noted a shift from interest in classification into typological schema, to understandings of processes of change which might be to a degree indeterminate (1981, p.87). The idea of process has not in itself moved the debate much further, by virtue of its potential for vagueness. A way forward, Guyer suggested, lay in uniting both structure and process through analysing specific historical processes (op. cit. p. 93). This is what I hope this thesis has done in looking at agricultural development in Mabumba in the late 1980s.

Much of the debate about "household" focused on whether or not a minimal, universal definition could be arrived at. What are the defining factors: coresidence; a sphere of domestic labour; a private sphere qualitatively different from the public? The general direction, as found in Netting, Wilk and Arnould's influential volume

(1984), was toward deconstruction: the need to distinguish what households look like (morphology) from what they do (activity). And to take account of households being conceptual as well as empirical units, defined cognitively and emically.

The method of making these arguments has usually been to challenge existing models of household with the richness of ethnographic examples. Thus Harris takes issue with some of the assumptions implicit in a Chayanovian view of the peasant household: that the idea of a harmonious domestic unit vaguely under the central control of a male household head (a patriarch in Marx's terms) simply is not supported by many anthropological studies (In: Young et al, eds., 1984, pp. 140-143). But this sort of argumentation is very different from what a Foucauldian discourse analysis calls for. At the same time, Foucault requires a seemingly more abstract, yet concrete line of questioning. Where does the idea of household come from, and what does it do? To use household as an analytical category can never simply be an innocent, scholarly act<sup>4</sup>.

To some extent I have followed Netting et al in concluding in chapter 3 that households in Mabumba look very different from one another, and need to be defined processually from an actor focus. There is some strain here in using the term household at all, and I have tended toward thinking in terms of activity groups, defined relative to kin linkages and lifecycle stage. However, an argument can be made that there is a process occurring in Mabumba in which some

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<sup>4</sup> There is a danger in discourse analysis that it lays open any analytical category to question; we have constantly to question the discursive practices which inform our own modes of investigation.



people are beginning to belong to what look very much like "households" in some of the models anthropologists have been criticising. What is the nature of this process?

In chapter 4 I considered differentia between types of household engaged in maize growing. There was a group, young married couples with infants and school age children, who looked much more like a Western nuclear family as household/production unit than other members of the village. It is not uncommon to find a fair degree of cooperation between husband and wife at this stage of the developmental cycle, but there seems to be an accentuation strongly tied to the adoption of maize. Husbands will demand their wives' assistance with the maize farm, and the time devoted to food crops may correspondingly suffer. Likewise, school age children may be expected to contribute to maize farming, where there is a lack of resources to gain extra-household labour. As we saw in chapter 3, the young married are those with the fewest demands made of them for labour by other kin (once brideservice is over); and the least justification for demanding labour of others. The successful reproduction of the maize enterprise depends on the labour of more than one individual, which tends to cement the productive cooperation of the young husband and wife; at least in the sense that husbands seem relatively successful in coercing their wives into supporting the enterprise<sup>5</sup>. Once established successfully in maize growing, such people may begin to talk in terms of money as their chief form of livelihood; to believe that shortfalls in food production will be

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<sup>5</sup> Coercion is perhaps the wrong image. It must be remembered that all individuals in Mabumba desire, indeed need, access to cash, which is generally in short supply.

made good by purchases. They already treat their immediate family as a consumption unit where money is concerned: since money is in short supply it is not attractive to distribute it too widely among kin. One can speculate that this nucleation will be further strengthened the more monetised "household" economic activities become. So one can say that certain kinds of household are coming into being, influenced by forces originating outside the village<sup>6</sup>.

This is to begin to suggest that processes of social and economic differentiation, through which such units appear, have strong material foundations. The question presents itself of how materialist and discourse analyses relate in understanding these processes.

#### Interpreting change in Mabumba.

From a materialist stance, it would be possible to argue that the emergence of a certain kind of household, as both an empirical and conceptual reality, is explained by the development of capitalist forces and relations of production. In Poewe's terms, such a unit is necessary for the reproduction of capital, as distinct from the more diffuse set of economic and social relations which have typified matrilineal peoples in Luapula, in which "household" is much more amorphous (1981, passim). More broadly, a materialist analysis focuses on differentiation in the strict sense of class formation. In Bernstein's terms, "Differentiation in the materialist sense is tied to the conditions in which wealth becomes capital, when it is

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<sup>6</sup> Note also the group of four young men referring to themselves as a household (ch. 3).

not consumed individually but productively through investment in means of production." (1979, p.430). On this basis he suggests a theoretical framework for understanding African peasantries in which the following distinctions are made:

1. 'Poor' peasants unable to reproduce themselves through household production alone (lack of means of production) who end up selling their labour power, and may eventually come to constitute a rural proletariat.
2. 'Middle' peasants who are able to reproduce themselves mainly through family labour and land but in specific relations with other forms of production.
3. 'Rich' peasants or kulaks who accumulate sufficiently to invest in production through the purchase of superior means of production and/or labour power, and who may come to form a category of capitalist farmers (through initiating and maintaining a cycle of extended reproduction based on accumulation).

(Adapted from op. cit. p. 431).

This kind of analysis might be applied to Mabumba. The balimi bakalamba appear to have the characteristics of rich peasants, being able to purchase labour to a considerable degree, and use superior means of production (ox ploughs and hired tractors), their entry to such social relations of production made possible through initial capital realised outside the village. At the other end of the scale are young maize farmers, and those outside maize production who have few resources to support and expand their own production, so sell their labour for cash<sup>7</sup>. In between, there are households, mostly in middle age, which have enough income to gain some extra-household labour on a regular basis.

However, on the time scale over which entry to maize production has

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<sup>7</sup> But see below; acceptability to labour on a maize farm is confounded with material exigencies.

happened, it is very difficult to say whether a clear process of class formation is occurring. Crehan and Von Oppen have similarly found a recent expansion of piece work labour in Northwestern Province, but cannot yet specify whether this is simply distributed as a function of lifecycle stage, or represents incipient class formation (1988, p. 134). Additionally, the infrastructure to support such schemes as Lima is itself quite fragile, so the possibility for reversal is strong.

A common analytical problem, then, has been that processes of commoditisation are far from even, whatever level of analysis one chooses. "There was clearly no straightforward progression through clearly marked and logical stages, along which groups and individuals moved with greater or lesser speed from peasant to proletarian", as Ranger stated, reviewing peasant research in Central and Southern Africa (1978, p. 106). In Bernstein's terms "the internal class differentiation of the peasantry is not a necessary condition nor effect of the intensification of commodity relations- this will depend on the concrete conditions in which intensification occurs." (1979, p.431).

Recourse to 'concrete conditions' to explain complications in the establishment of capitalism seems to leave a rather impoverished account of such complications. How does one encompass a general process of expanding capitalist enterprise (the balimi bakalamba have set themselves up in maize farming autonomously since the 1960s) and specific localised processes articulated through development institutions? The materialist stance is often just to say that institutions intensify universal processes:

"As far as rural development programmes are concerned, these objectively operate to incorporate the peasantry further into commodity relations, and attempt to standardise and rationalise peasant production of commodities for the domestic and international markets. The regulations of such schemes often dictate very precisely the forms of the labour process to be employed and represent a more direct intervention in the organisation of production. They tie the producers in various ways to the use of particular techniques of cultivation... and to direction and sanctions by the development agencies concerned."

(op. cit. p. 428, emphasis added).

It is the focus on objective processes which tends to define the paucity of the account. As Long insists, there is a problem with materialist analyses in that, focusing on capital, they do not deal adequately with the issue of human agency. Any process, such as commoditisation, needs to be seen as mediated through real actors. It is never disembodied (Long and van der Ploeg, 1989, p. 238). Discourse provides one route to this embodiment.

What discourse offers to a materialist analysis is the specification of how particular material forces become articulated on people, in producing social and economic patterns of change (Foucault's point about the development of the forces of production characteristic of capitalism requiring an apparatus of power; see chapter 1). It can contribute to seeing the relations of material and non-material aspects of change, without falling into the trap of conflating class formation with sociological indices of economic stratification<sup>a</sup>.

By looking at such questions as the meanings of money in Mabumba and the nature of productive individualism associated with maize, I have

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<sup>a</sup> Bernstein insists on the need to separate the two, since stratification refers to distribution and standards of consumption, which may be randomly related to people's position vis à vis ownership of the means of production (1979, p.430).

been able to show why certain people come to sell their labour. Some form of attachment to the maize enterprise is usually required to make someone acceptable to provide labour (because of the discursive associations I have enumerated). Some, such as the young male "group farmers" have set themselves up as labour specialists, worthy for employment on big schemes for the balimi bakalamba. I have also illustrated why only money and commodities are deemed appropriate payments for labour on maize farms, which has consequences for who can buy the labour and when. Poorer women who have not taken part in Lima schemes have fewer opportunities to begin maize farming, even if they are esteemed and regular beer brewers. We saw in chapter 4 that when a woman did use beer for payment, she found on noticing that one man's work had not been sufficient she was unable to dock his pay appropriately: he had already drunk his fill<sup>9</sup>. The quantification and discipline of maize growing militate against a payment which cannot be easily subdivided<sup>10</sup>, and which encourages "inappropriate" drunkenness.

Where others hire themselves out, it is not generally on maize farms, nor for payment in money (though there is incipient monetisation in most areas of Mabumba agriculture). Proletarianisation of labour, if at all a sustainable process, is neither universal nor even.

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<sup>9</sup> She was able to make this judgement because the two lima field had been demarcated and each worker had been allotted an equal number of ridges to prepare. It was obvious who had not completed the work. Such a judgement would be impossible of the lopping of branches for a citemene field.

<sup>10</sup> It is almost always katubi, served communally from a calabash, which is expected as payment for a work party. See chapter 4 and Appendix 1.

I have also illustrated the importance of education as a process for defining people's interests. There is a significant group of young secondary educated people who clearly purvey a capitalistic, entrepreneurial attitude to production. They wish to marry late, have few children, and invest their resources in maize farming, with a hope of expanding through the hire of labour. To an extent they serve as a role model to other young villagers.

I have stressed that those coming into contact with maize farming through educational schemes are very different from the balimi bakalamba. Together with the extension staff, they have tended to pooh pooh the latter for poor performance in maize farming (as assessed by the productionist standard of yield per unit area), and this has undoubtedly become a source of social tension. Whilst the institutions have encouraged meritocratic self-promotion among the young<sup>11</sup>, most balimi bakalamba are older men who, though the most "advanced" farmers in terms of level of capitalisation, still expect automatic respect for seniority-based status. Those among the balimi bakalamba who are village dwellers are often found in what can be violent altercations with insubordinate younger maize farmers. Significantly, the balimi bakalamba are subject to abuse because of lack of formal education: a causal link is inferred by the young between lack of appropriate education and poor maize yields, with

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<sup>11</sup> See, for example, the attitude of the Roman Catholic church in chapter 8.

little recourse to empirical evidence<sup>12</sup>.

All this is to point up the fact that in a materialist analysis the educated young maize farmers and balimi bakalamba may be seen as subject to the same process of class formation. Both are part of a rural area whose economic relations are becoming commoditised. The balimi bakalamba are already, on a small scale, capitalist farmers. The rest of the community appear to be a progressively differentiated peasantry, some heading toward being owners of the means of commodity production; others, as land for food production is progressively squeezed out<sup>13</sup>, and needs for cash continue to grow, being forced to sell their labour. Yet this is to treat the differences between them in one dimension only. The discourse perspective has allowed these to be more thoroughly investigated, showing how particular concrete relations have come about.

Discourse, in looking at power/knowledge/practice relations also says something important about exclusion from the process of commoditisation; or rather resistance to incorporation in capitalist

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<sup>12</sup> In the chief's village the issue focused on one particular man, a retired miner who ostentatiously built himself a zinc-roofed house by the highway on the edge of the village, with its own fenced and gated compound, enclosing a well which other villagers couldn't use. He did have a spectacularly poor maize yield in 1987, and became the butt of constant jokes about what the balimi bakalamba were like. In the dry season of 1988 his was the first village well to run dry, evoking nil sympathy.

<sup>13</sup> From a discourse perspective, the idea of land as a scarce factor of production has also been shown to be a localised, incipient phenomenon inseparable from the establishment of maize production. It is not yet a general process identifiable in all local land uses, though it is materially underpinned by the need to farm close to points of distribution of external resources.



forms of production<sup>14</sup>. We have seen that there are those who actively stay outside maize production, and those who subvert the restrictions imposed on resource use. This does not seem in any clear way to be connected with proletarianisation of labour. Villagers have memories, and part of what older villagers remember about government interventions are the sanctions that could be imposed for not participating correctly in schemes; most often mentioned were pre-Independence cooperatives where bailiffs seized possessions from defaulters. There is also awareness of just how "interventionist" the institutions have become. Taking loans means taking on certain obligations with government, which are increasingly difficult to discharge through an imaginative use of resources. It is clear that, locally at least, extension staff have become more vigilant, and the field staff of the donor schemes are keen on tours of inspection. Likewise, contact farmers are resented by some as they are seen, quite literally, to have been given the role of government inspector.

As the colonial government's interest in villagers was distrusted, so too is that of the independent state. There are those non-maize farmers who define themselves as wanting to remain such to avoid "handcuffing". As I have illustrated, this has to be seen in the context that certain among them (especially older divorced women with adult, unmarried sons) can reap some of the benefits of maize production without being subject to any of the attendant restrictions

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<sup>14</sup> Bernstein (1979, p.424) distinguishes simple commodity production (for the meeting of subsistence requirements) from the capitalist mode of production. Mabumba villagers are caught up in forces which are tending to convert the former to the latter.

themselves. There are also those who are effectively excluded from the enterprise, whatever their attitudes or interests might be. An old widow with few nearby kin would not be offered credit, and would find great difficulty in securing the labour even to farm one lima. Nevertheless, some people are remaining outside maize production explicitly to avoid what they perceive as a loss of liberty tied to increased dependence on government. There are a range of other cash generating activities to be explored as alternatives, such as cassava trading, (chapter 5) black smithing<sup>15</sup> and fish trading. These all generate cash, but being informal they are not subject to the restrictions of state orchestrated production. The approach to such activities is opportunistic, and can be seen as an expression of continuing distributionist attitudes. Cash maize farming and petty commodity production for the informal market are qualitatively different.

#### Discourse as ideology?

This discussion indicates that some of the effects of being included in maize production are quite transparent. Individual actors see the effects and make choices about the relative benefits and disadvantages of involvement. Undeniably material gain is a strong positive motivation, and the general offer of government support means that no great entrepreneurial flair is required to get started (as would be the case, say, with trying to run a shop).

Once producing maize, we have seen how some Mabumba villagers still use the resources more or less successfully in a wider exchange

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix 1.

network than the institutions expect. This is especially true, though not exclusively so, of those who start farming with no formal training: the Lima and secondary educated farmers are much more obviously in favour of following official orthodoxy. But it is not correct to make a firm distinction between two types of person in this way. What I am arguing for is the importance of seeing maize farming as implicit in a process of discursification.

It is this processual emphasis which needs highlighting in defending a discourse approach from the accusation that it is just a vulgar construction of ideology in another guise; a form of brainwashing which denies any possibility of autonomy for the actor. As argued in chapters 5 and 8, distributionism and productionism can be seen as different logics for the use of resources which the same person may use at different times. What is of interest is why and how a productionist outlook seems to be gaining ground, even for those with little formal education.

The critical issue is the ability of productionist activities to narrow the focus for resource use. Again, we can make a distinction based on the lifecycle stage of the household. The young married couple with small children, and, typically, little formal education, are both the major focus for support, for example by the churches, and those who are most subject to following the codes of practice enforced by the institutions. They are largely tied to credit, and find their ability to produce food progressively eroded by diversion of the woman's labour to maize. Under such circumstances, it is common now for the husband to opt for reinvestment in maize production as the means to economic survival. To be able to pay off

credit and realise some longer-term benefit means expansion of maize if possible, making good any food shortages by purchase from those who have food crops to spare. As Sharpe has indicated, the low rates of return on maize cultivation, declining return on capital investment, the dangers of making a year on year loss, and the inflexible needs to repay agricultural loans are all powerful incentives for those already heavily involved in maize production to grow and sell as much maize as possible, at the expense of maintaining food stocks (1987, pp. 54-55). Once thoroughly involved in maize growing, it becomes almost inescapable for the young married to adopt a productionist rationale to define what they are doing. They are constrained either to continue narrowing their channels of resource use, or get out of maize production altogether. Some do drop out, but the aggregate trend in Mabumba is a rapid upturn in the number of maize farmers.

They must be contrasted with the older villagers who were beginning maize farming at the same time. Here, men and women were treating maize growing as a small option to add to their already existing activities; in other words, to look on it more distributionally. They tended to see giving up food production as inimical and I even came across cases where the level of maize production was to be reduced, in favour of growing more of the valuable food crops, such as groundnuts. It was commoner among this group to find an ability to obtain inputs without loans, or partial loans only, given a range of cash income from other activities and remuneration from junior kin in urban areas. Likewise, it was not unusual for members of this group to move in and out of maize production from season to season.

To make a generalisation, the discursive influences of maize production are more profound on young producers entering from a small resource base, where material exigencies tend to reinforce restrictive use of resources in the ways prescribed by the agricultural support institutions (though formal education or connection with those with education will cross cut this division). The maize enterprise comes to assume ever greater significance in these people's lives, whether they would choose so or not. It is, then, by stealth that a productionist outlook becomes adopted; a necessary adjunct of material conditions, encouraged by the influential local group of secondary school graduates: not that people's consciousness is radically changed over very short periods. Again, I must state that I identify this process tentatively. It may be that in the longer term the young "nuclear" families come to form a capitalist group of farmers with the balimi bakalamba, and that if food crop production continues to decline, others will be forced to sell their labour on a more regular basis. But this depends so much on the continued presence and influence of state institutions that completely different patterns of differentiation are possible<sup>16</sup>.

So far, in asking rhetorically whether discourse merely stands for ideology, I have considered the effects, material and discursive, of cash maize production. Of course, this particular activity has been

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<sup>16</sup> It has been the case in areas of Central Province, where maize production is much more strongly established, that it is the larger farmers who are more constrained to concentrate their resources within maize (cf. Sharpe, 1987, p.45). To some degree any analysis of the interactions between villagers and institutions is going to be a snapshot, and not necessarily of great predictive value. Nevertheless, the value of a discourse style of analysis in seeing how certain relations have come into being remains.

introduced into a background of existing agricultural practices, so one element of explaining the success of the maize discourse must be to explicate its fit with these other activities. In chapter nine, I have shown how accommodations are possible between what look like radically different premises about the causes and cures of crop disease. I have detected within distributionism allowance for different levels and types of causation. So one maize farmer, George, supposed the chief's real reason for wanting to curtail cassava leaf (katapa) consumption was a naturalistic one, rather than to do with Makumba. Yet at the same time, he would not eat this relish himself for a different reason: that an ancestral spirit (mupashi) had proscribed it in a dream. For him, it was perfectly reasonable to attribute different kinds of agency to what amounted to the same empirical issue. Though an apparent contradiction, whilst mipashi are still generally reckoned to influence people's day-to-day lives, George had seen no evidence during his lifetime of the active, special relationship between the chief and Makumba. For George, the issues of eating katapa and the causes of the kolela (mealy bug) epidemic were possibly, but not necessarily, connected.

I proceeded from this example to a contrast between agricultural and other interventions. Potential for disharmony between productionist and distributionist ideas was shown to be greater in the field of health than in agriculture, since contradictory diagnoses are being made about the same conditions in particular people. The potential for such confrontation has been less in agriculture precisely because of the exotic nature of the cash maize package. Maize has, in a sense, defined a new space for itself, and older interpretative frameworks have not been applied to it: Makumba has not declaimed on

maize (ch. 9), nor have witchcraft accusations yet concerned the crop (ch. 4). The point of entry to becoming a new, discursive agriculture, is defined for maize by its difference from existing practices and its intimate association with government.

ARPT and the "liberation" of agricultural research.

"A language of argumentation is not only a language. Through repeated use it comes to engender some properties of, and tendencies to, thinking and willing of its own."  
(Apthorpe, 1984, p.128).

In these conclusions so far I have sought to summarise the findings of a discourse approach to understanding rural development, and define its validity in relation to actor oriented and materialist analyses, showing that it avoids the common pitfalls of methodological individualism and ideology-as-superstructure. I have shown how certain cognitive patterns come about and influence people's behaviour, necessarily grounded in material conditions. To end, I wish to turn this analytical armoury back to a substantive issue for development. In Mabumba, and more widely in the Southern African region, Farming Systems Research (FSR) has grown to be a major component of national agricultural research programmes. In Zambia, ARPT was formulated specifically to break out of the monomodal focus on maize. The idea, as presented in chapter 1, was to move toward research adaptive to local farmers' conditions, by conducting experimentation with them on their own fields, approximating the agronomic, social and economic environment of "lived experience". ARPT are set apart from other development institutions in that, as researchers, they exist to learn about local practices, on the basis of which interventions can be developed. They are multidisciplinary teams which seek to define problems and

propose solutions holistically. Their aim, at least in defining problems, closely parallels this thesis.

Given that they are one element in the interface between government and villagers, though, it becomes relevant to turn a discourse focus onto what tend to be treated as transparent theoretical models and working methods<sup>17</sup>. I will highlight some of the major insights which discourse gives, drawing comparison with earlier examples in the text.

As might be expected, the major focus for intervention is production, rather than distribution. However, through the input of economists, a certain amount of attention is given to distributive processes. This contribution, nonetheless, as in Apthorpe's sense of distributionalism, is usually in terms of models of the rational actor (1984, pp. 129-139).

ARPT in Luapula used as its focus for analysis households differentiated according to total number of bags of agricultural products realised annually. On the basis of this distinction, target household groups were defined at which to aim specific technological interventions. The definition of household used for this purpose was one formulated by MAWD:

"...a household includes all those individuals who live in close proximity to each other and who form one work-team under the guidance or direction of the leader, the head of the household. Most members of the household would be related to each other by either blood or affinal ties; others would be members of the extended family. The household may include young married couples and their children if for their subsistence and other economic activities these young couples

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<sup>17</sup> At least in the discourses of the developers themselves, and in some academic institutions specialising in rural development.



depend on the larger unit headed by the household leader who decides where to direct resources such as oxen, implements, tools and time and labour of household members for that particular day or week."

(MAWD and RDSB, 1986, p.3).

Guyer has criticised this type of definition in the context of African FSR because it attributes a form of corporateness which, though accurate for some South Asian cases, is very wide of the mark in much of rural Africa (1986, p. 98). She would prefer to see households as temporary locations for sets of mutually independent enterprises, which need explaining in terms of the gender division of labour and the developmental cycle of the domestic group. Most importantly, the latter themselves must be seen in historical context: "the division of labour, the terms of exchange between men and women, and the size and internal structure of the social groupings within which these are organised" (op. cit. p. 97) are always in dynamic relation. In these terms I have considered the emergence of new kinds of "household" in Mabumba. How, though, does the kind of model ARPT uses influence interpretation of the rural economy?

#### Agronomic and economic modelling.

An issue which focuses the problem is intercropping. Many agricultural research centres have become keen on intercropping research because crop mixtures often mimic existing subsistence practices; they may be nutritionally beneficial; they can improve economic returns to land through combining crops; may show resistance to crop pests because of genetic diversity; and improve soil consolidation and fertility. In an actual ARPT example an intercrop was devised comparing sole cropping of maize, groundnuts, beans and

soya with combinations of maize and each of the pulses. The agronomic results of the trial indicated how different types of competition between crops influenced yield. These were subsumed under a number of economic interpretations; of returns to labour (in monetary and energy terms) and returns to cash for inputs, taking account of which tasks are primarily male and which female. Broad recommendations were stated as follows:

1. When the farmer is only considering what to do with one piece of land, whether he is concerned with earning the most cash, producing the most food, or maximising returns to his time, a plot of maize alone is the best alternative.
2. If the farmer is planning in any case to plant two plots, he would be financially better off by interplanting both with maize and beans. It would also take up relatively less of his work time. On the other hand, it would sap more of his energy and give less in return than one plot each of maize and groundnuts.

(ARPT-Luapula, Annual Report, 1986-87, vol.1, p. 14).

Such statements clearly assume an autonomous decision maker, or at least one who has the cooperation of other producers for all his decisions. This is clearly a misrepresentation of household relations. For example, in the maize growing conjugal household, the husband will generally be in sole control of the maize enterprise, whilst his wife will grow and dispose of the food crops (chs. 4 and 5). In this situation men gain access to pulse crops through their wives: intercropping is not really an issue for them. Nor is it for their wives, who do not make decisions about how the maize is grown. To suggest working together on these crops is to propose that women risk losing some autonomy over food crops. I discovered little enthusiasm among married men and women for this arrangement, negating the local relevance of the agronomic benefits or demerits of different types of crop combination.

There were cases of women who had become maize growers, and decided to try intercropping as a means to retaining some pulse crop production in the face of increased labour diversion to maize. They were mainly divorced women who did not have many channels of access to maize labour for land preparation. Since ARPT had observed most intercropping being done with local maize (mataba caushi), they had targetted the trial at subsistence farmers, by which they meant people having little or no involvement in the formal cash sector. My observations suggested that experimentation with maize-bean intercropping might be worthwhile, but that certain female-headed households having some involvement with cash maize might be the most appropriate target. ARPT made no distinction between types of subsistence household, and in particular did not qualify a distinction between male and female-headed units. Influenced by the concerns of donor agencies, they have tended to see all female-headed units as on the margins of subsistence production, reflecting a lack of attention to variation in the composition of households (chapter 4) and the variety of economic links between them.

The application, a priori, of certain types of model can also be seen to distort appreciation of other aspects of village economic behaviour. Given that maize production in Mabumba was rapidly expanding in the late 1980s, and that supplies of mealie meal from the state milling company were erratic, ARPT wanted to explore the possibilities for developing better maize storage facilities at a household level. There were thought to be two important considerations, related to the casual observation that very few farmers kept more than two bags they had grown for home consumption, irrespective of production level. First, in an area where maize was

not a traditional dry grain crop, it was expected storage technologies would be poorly developed. Secondly, since there was a heavy government subsidy on mealie meal, it was taken for granted there was an overriding economic imperative to sell grain and buy meal.

My qualitative study pointed to the uniform small retention for home consumption as misleading; and that there was no simple economic motivation which could be differentiated by production level. First, there was a strong local dietary preference for cassava, more marked among older people: even some growing much maize had little desire to keep any, or buy mealie meal. "We are cassava eaters here. Maize is just for earning money", as they would say. Secondly, there were different factors influencing maize retention across production levels for those who were maize eaters. Among such households growing less than about ten bags of maize per year there was a strong tension between cash needs and the desire to extend spending power in time: if financial conditions allowed, they preferred to keep some of their own maize and take it in small quantities to the local hammer mill, thus avoiding the relatively large investment in 25kg or 50kg of state-produced mealie meal. Frequently, though, they were constrained to sell all they had grown because of fears of not being able to pay back loans or lacking cash for commodities. At such times, mealie meal would be consumed infrequently, and by purchase in small quantities from the village market.

Households at higher production levels (up to 40 bags) expressed quite different reasons for not keeping more of their own maize. In general these households were at a later stage of the developmental

cycle, and, as argued earlier, tend to have more free cash accessible, which can be used to purchase meal. Respondents in this group opined they would rather buy meal as the village hammer mill was unreliable and frequently out of action, whilst the stored hybrid maize was susceptible to pest attack.

Interestingly, none of the respondents mentioned any economic comparison of retention of maize for consumption as against buying meal. The assumption by ARPT of this comparison was not so much wrong as irrelevant; an easily adopted piece of economic reasoning, and one tending to homogenise diverse motivations for retaining little of one's own maize crop. A relatively simple qualitative study had suggested that village level storage would not be much of a cause célèbre in Mabumba, except perhaps for the larger maize growers whom it was not ARPT's primary aim to serve.

Other examples can be adduced of the restrictiveness of analytical models used by ARPT, but these all lead to the conclusion that they miss many dimensions of economic life in Mabumba through being deductive, rather than inductive. What I have tried to do is show how crops have social identities: they need to be seen in terms of who grows them, and for what purposes. That cassava is locally the most important food crop, eaten with every meal, makes it different from groundnuts, valued more as snack food to accompany beer, with a high value on the informal market and as a gift to friends and relatives. There again maize is looked on as a particular sort of monetised crop, to be grown for sale to the state<sup>18</sup>. ARPT tend to

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<sup>18</sup> I found very few cases of cash maize being used as gifts between relatives.

ask questions posed from an economic rationality which treats crops, as in Northern farm management, as simply substituable enterprises. So, they were puzzled that more people were not interested in selling cassava to the state when a. the state price had come to exceed that for maize, and b. cassava is much less sensitive to inclement seasons than maize. As I have shown in chapter 5, this is to ignore that women, whose time is already stretched in maintaining household food provision, fear the nutritional consequences of selling more than incidental surpluses of cassava. At the same time, they know that much better prices are available through informal trade, and are not keen to have their production inspected by the state to the degree that maize is.

This last statement leads to a second order of analysis in the interface between ARPT and the community, which also is not visible to ARPT's analytical techniques.

#### Operational problems

By operational I mean here processual aspects of ARPT's work; their practices, and how these influence their concepts. From ARPT's perspective, what they do in the village is conduct experiments to compare different crop husbandry practices, the best of which can be transferred for adoption by villagers via extension recommendations. This is not, generally, how villagers perceive the same activities.

First, ARPT are seen as yet another arm of government presence, not clearly differentiated from the extension service. When asked to compare the two institutions, most respondents made reference to the fact that ARPT trials were on smaller plots than extension

demonstrations; one therefore stood to gain more (in free inputs and harvest) from involvement with extension. Following from this, and because extension demonstrations have always focused on "improved yields from better practices", trials farmers, when asked about completed trials, described the results in terms quite different from those found in ARPT's annual reports. Two examples are pertinent. One trial on bean seed rate concluded there was a strong case for reduced seed rates (compared to common village practice) because of the high price of bean seed (e.g. ARPT Annual Report, 1986/87, vol. 1 p.10). The farmers, in contrast, were interested only in yields, and considered their "traditional" practices and the lower seed rates as equally good if the yields were the same. They did not appear to look on seed as a significant cost, and indeed focused their comments more on labour requirements: to achieve the various specified plant populations they had to plant the seeds in carefully spaced lines, which they saw as an inconvenient increase in work when they were used to broadcasting. The apparent significance of the trial was irrelevant from their perspective. For them, the main point of taking part was to gain access to bean seed, which had become scarce in Mabumba. Their overall response was lukewarm as, unlike with maize, there was no implicit promise of future access to resources through participation. The same generally can be said of other ARPT trials which have not included maize.

In another trial, on maize variety, fertiliser and management, a different sort of perceptual mismatch occurred. Here, there was general enthusiasm for the trial, and many of the participants claimed they had learned new, better methods of growing the crop which improved yields. Specifically, they had found that planting at

a wider spacing than they were used to was advantageous. Ironically, these "adopted practices" had not been the trial variables, but were contained in orthodox recommendations which had been approved by extension some years previously (Lima Crop Memo for Luapula Province, 1979). In contrast, for ARPT the trial revealed different fertiliser responses for the varieties, and an interaction between fertiliser and the level of management applied by the farmer to the crop.

#### Interpretation structuring "reality".

The general response to my observations on the maize trial farmers was that the misunderstanding over the trial objectives did not really matter: the results were valid, and would be appropriately transferred through extension recommendations. Given that ARPT wishes to understand the farming "system" and how it changes, to ignore that the distinction between "experiment" and "recommendation" is not made by farmers, and that "experiments" are having some direct effects without mediation through an extension service, is clearly limiting.

In this particular case the practical consequences of a difference of perspective were insignificant: farmers were in any case supposed to know about and be using the wider maize spacing. However, this kind of differential understanding I see as part of a more fundamental problem with the methodologies ARPT and other similar teams use, which returns us to the question of discourse. This is to say that a certain methodology or logical structure of investigation actually gets in the way of seeing some aspects of rural communities. We have seen how the concept of household used in Zambian FSR is restrictive, and that experimentation being logically prior to recommendation



doesn't fit the situation of a team interacting with the community. Most controversially ARPT uses models which apparently link technical aspects of production with qualities of the producer.

In the maize trial, two management "levels" had been defined as those characteristic of "Lima" and "Subsistence" farmers. The farmers chosen to participate were selected according to observations made by the ARPT trials assistant. "Lima" farmers were those who appeared to do what would be expected of a farmer trained in maize husbandry through extension: selection of good soil; timely planting, weeding and fertilising according to recommendations; and achievement of expected yields. "Subsistence" farmers were those who appeared not to do some or all of the foregoing. Unsurprisingly, a significant difference was found between "Lima" and "Subsistence" farmers in yield terms. Specifically, there were strikingly different fertiliser response curves, leading ARPT to make strong recommendations about the most economic use each group could make of fertilisers (ARPT-Luapula, Annual Report 1986-87 pp. 15-16), an apparent improvement over blanket recommendations for all farmers.

The way ARPT selected "Lima" and "Subsistence" farmers was not, however, congruent with the general definition used by the Department of Agriculture: that "Lima" farmers have received training (from whatever source) in cash crop production, and produce and sell to state organs on a small scale. "Subsistence" farmers, in contrast, are untrained and have little or no involvement in the formal sector. Farmers were selected by ARPT according to their expected characteristics, supposing the aims of Lima training had been achieved. On interviewing this group I discovered that their

cropping achievements bore no clear relation to their training. In particular, those who were labelled "subsistence" had all been growing maize previously using credit through the cooperative society, and had some degree of contact with local extension staff. By dint of participating for five years in a trial, they were also given instruction in basic husbandry by the ARPT trials assistant. In selecting certain individuals according to what is seen as the result of training (or its absence), ARPT was able to make a very firm recommendation to two "groups" whose real existence had not been verified. Simultaneously, it suggested a degree of success for lima training which was probably unwarranted, given that some of the "subsistence" farmers might equally well have been placed in the "lima" category.

ARPT's interpretative categories: household, "subsistence" farmer, etc., are used normatively in relation to what they are meant to describe. They take on a reality which has, in the terms I have presented in the early chapters of this thesis, no organic relation to the sets of economic and social relations which can be arrived at through participant observation. And they provide a means to assessing the success of intervention which also remains an abstraction. There is a tendency for a sleight of hand to occur: characteristics of groups of people (economic, behavioural, etc.) are assumed as the results of processes; so if the characteristics are found, the processes can be inferred.

The central problem is one of discriminating category from process, and how the two relate. Like Extension, ARPT uses a rather mechanistic methodology, which, crucially, does not see any real

difference between working with a community and working in the isolation of a research station. The participating farmer is a technician. Thus, when field trials fail, or farmers understand trial results differently from ARPT, there is a strong tendency for ARPT to see this in terms of failure of communication because the level of technical complexity of training was inappropriate. There is no sensitivity to the fact that the relation between ARPT and the farmer may chiefly be about access to resources from the farmer's perspective, whether this means the seed and fertiliser or the status of being an individual selected to be "modernised" (cf. Crehan and Von Oppen, 1988, p. 129). Nor is there awareness that there is an unequal dialogue occurring; or even that the relationship with the community is dialogical. Farmers know that the government have always defined the terms of intervention, with the major example being the paternalistic "enlightenment" of maize. Given this historical dependence, farmers do not see ARPT's trials programme as something they are active in as agents, in the sense of being able to comment, criticise and alter. In the beans trial, the supposed traditional planting method was an artefact, as farmers were required to plant on ridges when in practice they would have used wide beds. Yet they did not raise any objection, since they saw themselves as principally interested in the resources and not in any position to alter what was done. Even where trials have been abject failures, farmers have tended to write them off, assuming that participation might mean other resources in future (cf. the chief's speech to ARPT trials farmers in ch. 9). They may potentially have a voice on such issues, but there is no context at present for raising it.

The discourse of ARPT seems, then, to fall within what Long and van

der Ploeg identify as a more common and widespread "projectification" of rural people by development institutions. Their way of looking at the world obscures the space, time and social relations between all the actors involved (Long and van der Ploeg, 1989, p. 228). To overcome this problem requires seeing intervention as a " 'multiple reality' made up of differing cultural perceptions and social interests, and constituted by the ongoing social and political struggles that take place between the social actors involved." (op. cit. p.226). An important focus must therefore be "the processes by which interventions enter the life-worlds of the individuals and groups affected and thus come to form part of the resources and constraints of the social strategies they develop." (op. cit. p. 228).

This thesis provides one case of such an approach. It has emphasised how institutional discourse comes to be a constraining force. We have seen here how ARPT's models and interventions are mutually constitutive, not logically separable in the way they assume (cf. Clay and Schaffer, 1984, ch.1). As a discursive presence they are actively involved in shaping the "reality" in which they intervene. Their processes of labelling produce convenient, quantified interpretations which legitimise their funding by donors<sup>19</sup>. At the same time, their methods help define how farmers see their own practices. Though their accent on multidisciplinary research from a farmer oriented perspective looks like an improvement on past styles of intervention, they are caught up in the limitations of productionism in the same way as Extension, the churches and the

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Long and van der Ploeg, 1989, p. 231.

Department of Social Development.

This is not to say that ARPT doesn't have a possible emancipatory role. Improvements in their output, in the sense of agronomically and economically sound new agricultural practices are possible. For example, on the basis of my studies for ARPT<sup>20</sup>, intercrops might be proposed with reference to existing patterns of labour use, and how and through whom distribution of the products happens, making finer distinctions between and within households than is currently the practice. Such might be a refinement in deciding what to experiment on and whom to direct intervention at. But to achieve the adaptiveness it seeks will require much more time in listening to farmers, looking at what they do technically, and seeing how this fits with their wider social, political and economic relations. Many years perhaps will be needed to change the relationship sufficiently that farmers can see themselves as partners in a research process. Now it is common to hear the comment at ARPT field days "Why are you asking all these questions when you have come to teach us?"

But, if nothing else, I should have made clear by now that to understand intervention purely at the level of intention is misleading. The sort of analysis Long and van der Ploeg call for can never be in the form of an autocritique by one particular institution. On practical, let alone intellectual grounds, no team with a restricted mandate is going to be able to cover the range of interpretation which is required. And what I have been able to do is

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<sup>20</sup> Gatter, 1988, a., b. and c.

merely scratch the surface by looking at a very obvious case of interventionism (maize in Zambia). Clearly, a space needs to be created in which development practitioners, whether research or intervention oriented, can combine with academic institutions in redefining and interpreting "development". Within this context, a major question which will have to be addressed is how the voices of the intended beneficiaries can come to play a role in defining the terms of development, a question as much political as academic. Though in the 1980s institutions have become enamoured of the rhetoric of participation and bottom-up development, what often passes for allowing rural people to articulate their needs is often really a case of teaching them how to do it<sup>21</sup>. Discourse again.

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<sup>21</sup> Reiterating the point that the emergence of hidden voices is greatly problematic (cf. Crehan, 1990, p. 17).

## Appendix 1. Non-agricultural production.

I divide non-agricultural activities by gender as this division is important to the arguments in chapters 4 and 5; though not rigid, the gender division of labour is an important organising principle.

### Men.

Male activities are basically of two sorts: extractive and artesanal. The extractive activities are fishing, hunting and charcoal making; all reliant directly on bush resources. By 1988 all these activities had become quite rare, especially in the chief's village, through a combination of shortage of resources and the emergence of new economic possibilities for men.

### Hunting.

Even by 1960 Kay reported little hunting of large game (antelope, etc., in chief Kalaba's (1964a, p. 58). The commonest fresh bush meat obtained in Mabumba in 1988 was bush rat, caught in snares and traps set in the cassava fields. According to ARPT (Labour Survey; Mabumba, 1986-87), for a sample of thirteen houses a total of only 3.5 hours was recorded as spent in hunting over one year. A few men, such as Abel's elder brother, John, still went further afield occasionally to hunt larger game with guns. Each year John made the 100km trip, by bicycle, to the game management area in chief Milambo's, in search of elephants straying beyond the protected zone. Perhaps once every three years he succeeded in shooting one and, assisted by Abel, disposed of much of the meat by sale to local villagers, returning with as much as possible to Mabumba, to be given as prestige gifts to relatives.

Elephant meat is a very highly valued gift, and extremely rare in Mabumba in the late 1980s. John still made the effort to hunt because of the social kudos which would come with an elephant kill. His success in this area undoubtedly was a factor in his selection in 1988 as the new headman of Langi.

### Fishing.

Fishing is both a male and female activity, though there is a rough gender division according to method, as presented in table 1.

Table 1: Fishing in Mabumba chiefdom

| <u>Fishing method</u>                                                                                                               | <u>Location</u>               | <u>Season</u>                     | <u>Fishers</u>              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <u>ukwela</u> <sup>1</sup> (poisoning).<br>Pounded leaves and roots added to dammed sections of streams. Fish scooped into baskets. | Rivers                        | Dry<br>Aug.- Oct.                 | Women<br>(groups)           |
| <u>ukupila</u><br>Fish found at bottom of drained cassava soaking pits.                                                             | Dambo<br>margins              | as above                          | Women<br>(singly)           |
| <u>ukuloba</u> (rod fishing).                                                                                                       | Rivers and<br>dambos          | Year round                        | Youths<br>and<br>children   |
| <u>ukusakila</u> (net fishing).                                                                                                     | Rivers and<br>lakes.          | As above.                         | Men<br>(Rare in<br>Mabumba) |
| <u>ukusenga</u> (basket fishing).                                                                                                   | Dammed rivers<br>and streams. | Late dry<br>season<br>(Sep.-Nov.) | Women<br>(groups)           |

For both men and women in Mabumba fishing is more time consuming than other extractive activities (hunting and gathering respectively), but even so this amounts to only 10-15 hours annually per individual (op. cit.)<sup>2</sup>. Very little fishing at all was done in and around the chief's village in 1987-88, the highest concentration of activity being in the small villages bordering the Mansa river. The bulk of fish consumed in the chiefdom comes from lake Bangweulu via fish traders and Mabumba women trading for food crops.

#### Charcoal burning.

Charcoal burning, like fishing, is unevenly distributed through the chiefdom. More is produced by men in remote villages having access to relatively dense woodland. In the more central villages most men

<sup>1</sup> The following were given as fish poisons (scientific names not identified). Leaves of : kausamba. Roots of: kapofwe, kaucheme, umunengene, umutupa and citombolwa.

<sup>2</sup> These figures have to be read with caution. Some activities such as gathering are ancillary to others (agricultural field work in this instance), and are not thought of as using time by the villagers. Thus quantitative surveys are likely to underestimate physical times spent on such activities.



know how to produce it, but choose not to because of high labour requirements (for cutting branches, transporting them, stacking, burying and burning them) in relation to low prices (about K10 for a maize sack full in 1988). The latter buy charcoal in small quantities from the former, so production seems to follow a pattern of comparative advantage (the same contrast applies for finger millet and beer production).

#### Men's artesanal work.

Artesanal work is common in the main villages, with an emphasis on cash earning. A useful distinction can be made between crafts requiring only bush products, and those also needing some purchases.

#### "Bush" crafts.

Under this heading I include basket (imitonga, pl.), fish trap (imiono, pl.), mat (matanda, pl.) and gourd calabash (insupa, pl.) making. With the exception of fish trap making, practised by a few senior men in the fishing areas, these skills were fairly widely shared throughout the chiefdom. However, those who were particularly skilled and industrious would sell their products at Mabumba market at the sorts of price that could be observed in Mansa markets (K12 for a basket; k3 for a small calabash). The possibilities for doing so, I was told, were increasing since the tarring of the road by the Chinese. More strangers were wanting to settle in the area as farmers, and there were plenty of government workers (mainly school staff) who hadn't the time or the skills to produce these items for themselves.

Most of these activities were in the dry season, influenced by the fact that mature plant products were required.

#### Crafts requiring purchases.

In this category I place carpentry, repair of shoes, bicycles, radios and watches; and various kinds of black smithing.

Carpentry, though partly dependent on natural products, also requires glue, nails and varnish which have to be purchased in Mansa. The most notable carpenter in the area, at Kasanga, even bought planks from a timber merchant in town because of a shortage of suitably sized trees around the village. He alone among the local carpenters had attended a trade school whilst working in the Copperbelt, and his products sold for considerably more than other men's (chairs upwards of K50; tables for more than K100) to the most wealthy villagers, including government institution staff and large farmers (balimi bakalamba). He occasionally took his wares to sell in the town markets.

The other carpenters produced more modestly and sold only in the villages.

Carpentry work could be carried on at any time of year, though less was done during cultivation and planting, when agricultural

activities were prioritised. There was no shortage of customers and carpenters liked the fact that income could be obtained in regular, small amounts. Overall, though, carpentry was perceived as a less important source of income than maize farming.

The various kinds of repair work were likewise practised by only a few individuals, and these skills were all self-taught. Work on bicycles, radios and watches was sporadic as only a small proportion of the community owned these items. Small purchases such as glue, wire and screwdrivers were required by the repairers, and problems with supplies from Mansa often limited the scope for work.

Blacksmithing has an interesting history, in that the Ushi were once noted as iron and copper workers who smelted their own ores in village furnaces (imicele, pl.). This practice died out during the colonial era, and one informant in an earlier oral history study of Ushiland stated that the British had deliberately discouraged the practice so that they could gain a monopoly over the production and sale of metal objects (Chanda and Yambayamba, Case 3. p.1).

I found one old bellows furnace in the chief's village where some of the older men gathered to repair hoes and axes. But, a new kind of blacksmithing activity was growing up among a few of the younger men. When the Chinese road builders departed in 1986 they left behind them quantities of scrap metal which these men appropriated and used in making charcoal braziers (ibabula), saucepans, hoe blades and axe blades, fashioning makeshift tools as they went. The scrap left by the Chinese was soon used up, so supplies are bought now from scrap merchants in Mansa.

### Building.

Building work is almost entirely a male activity, though women occasionally take part in brick making. Work begins as soon after the end of the rains as possible. The making and burning of bricks is a collective activity, culminating in a whole night's work of starting the fires and sealing the pile with a layer of clay. Beer is provided by the owner of the future house, which is drunk through the night, making brick burning a rowdy and enjoyable activity.

In contrast, brick laying is solitary and practised by only a handful of men<sup>3</sup>. It is now done entirely for cash, the price ranging upwards from K100, depending on the size of house. The making of the roof, however, falls to the owner, and here again beer parties may be employed, though cash is increasingly used for payment. The final job, thatching, is a fairly specialised skill, and one that is paid for with cash.

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<sup>3</sup> Structures other than the houses themselves, such as granaries, pit latrine enclosures and kitchen outbuildings continue to be built of pole and dagga, and are generally made by the inhabitants of each house (the husband in a conjugal setting, or a male matrilineal relative in a female-headed household).

## Women

Broadly speaking, women's productive activities outside agriculture can be classed as to do with household sustenance; that is, with procuring resources for the household, maintaining it on a day-to-day basis, and looking after dependent household members.

As in many other African societies, the provision of food, and related collecting of water and fuel wood are the province of women. Men will be seen doing these activities from time to time, and indeed all children learn how to cook, though it is thought demeaning (at least by men) to do so unless it is absolutely necessary.

In quantitative terms the preparation and cooking of food are the most time consuming of all women's activities, occupying relatively as much time as all agricultural activities together (15% of active time: ARPT Labour Survey)<sup>4</sup>. Under the heading of food preparation the gathering of relishes from the bush can be included.

### Gathering.

A variety of seasonal bush foods are gathered by women; also by adolescents and bachelors, though rarely by married men.

In the late dry season (October) various kinds of caterpillar (ifishimu) appear in abundance, and are highly desired as relish. They are dried, stored, and later boiled. Most of these insects are kept for home consumption, though a few women did take some to Mansa markets during field work.

Shortly after the onset of rain mushrooms (ibowa, pl) can be found, and different varieties are common in different months. Like caterpillars, they are highly desired, being described as "almost as good as meat". Again, some are sold, either at Mabumba market or (occasionally) in Mansa.

These are the two foods for which the most concerted gathering efforts are made. In addition, various fruits (especially of mpundu and musuku) are collected in small quantities in the late dry season and early rains, mostly as snacks for the children.

One form of collection was a male activity. This was the cutting of grass for thatching; or at least one particular kind of grass, known as ulweyo. Ulweyo is noted for being strongly waterproof, and relatively uncommon. It is often the thatchers themselves who collect it, or others who will sell on to them (a large bundle was selling for K3).

### Brewing.

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<sup>4</sup> The amount of time spent on gathering is insignificant, though it makes an important contribution to the diet in the rainy season. It is the processing of cassava which is the single most time-consuming of all women's productive activities.

Aside from entering cash maize production, beer brewing was described by women in Mabumba as the only means they had of raising money (they tended not to count sales of small quantities of food crops) and, especially in households with no adult male members, an important means of access to male labour for male agricultural tasks (chiefly citemene cutting and cultivation of "digging" gardens).

As with other skills, some women display a greater talent for beer making than others, and considerable admiration accrues to someone known as a good brewer. Indeed, the status of the most highly regarded women in Mabumba was tied partly to their being good and frequent brewers. Most households, with the exception of a few belonging to protestant sects (mainly Seventh Day Adventist and CMMML) who claimed they would not brew or drink beer on the grounds of being Christians, brewed from time to time. The most productive would have beer for sale as much as once per month, though the frequency would go down considerably in the early dry season as finger millet stocks ran out.

#### Types of beer.

The "traditional" Ushi beers are all made from finger millet or sorghum. These are katubi, katata and munkoyo (the former two are millet beers). Katubi is the most prized, and the one that would be expected by a work party (though katata would be acceptable). It takes about one week to prepare and is served in a calabash, hot water being added to the dense brew, and the party taking it in turns to drink through a straw. Katata takes a similar time to prepare, but is served cold and undiluted. These two beers are becoming less common in the main road villages because of shortages of finger millet<sup>5</sup>. To some degree the deficiency is made good by purchase of finger millet or beer from the citemene cutters in more remote areas, by those with sufficient cash.

The beer most often available in chief Mabumba's during my stay was munkoyo, a beer with a distinctive flavour imparted by the roots of a shrub. Traditionally it was made from sorghum (masaka), a crop now rarely grown. It is most often made now from purchased maize meal. It is the easiest beer to make, taking only two or three days, is produced even by young unmarried women, and is sold at Mabumba market (a sweet, not very alcoholic kind), as well as from people's houses.

Most recently, a beverage new to Mabumba had started to be produced, copied from the peri-urban villages around Mansa. This sikana wine (or just wini) was made simply from sugar, brewer's yeast and water, with tea leaves (or occasionally fruit in season) to give some flavour. With a shortage of finger millet for making the traditional beers it became increasingly popular as an alternative source of income, until production was halted through a dispute between a brewer and one of the village bar owners, which in part arose over

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<sup>5</sup> However, it is acceptable to make katata with a mixture of millet and mealie meal, and the proportion of maize in the mixture is tending to increase.

competition for custom (see chapter 9).

### Paid employment.

There remains one category of productive activity to enumerate: paid employment, which exists in Mabumba in two spheres; incoming and outgoing (leaving aside for now casual labour provision and hire for agricultural work).

#### 1. Incoming workers.

In the chief's village to the greatest extent, but also to a degree in some of the other larger villages, there were significant numbers of government employees, most of whom were from outside the district. In Mabumba itself there were representatives of departments concerned with health, education, social development, law and agriculture. Education was most strongly represented, with some twenty teachers in 1988 in both primary and secondary schools, and the chief was relocating part of the village to make room for more. The clinic had two nurses, a health assistant and a clinical officer; the court a judge and clerks<sup>6</sup>; social development one officer and an assistant; and agriculture two extension workers (block and camp officers) plus the ARPT trials assistant. The vast majority of these were men in 1988, with the exception of the new social development officer and her assistant (and the nurses). A number of small jobs had been spawned from these departments, such as cleaning for the clinic and court, and cooking for the secondary school. Such jobs were eagerly sought and all were held by men<sup>7</sup>.

#### 2. Outgoing workers.

It is well documented that Luapula and Northern provinces became male labour reserves for the mines of Katanga and the Copperbelt, after the imposition of hut tax by the British (Roberts, A.D., 1973, p.28; Gunnison, I., 1959, 27ff.; Bates, R., 1976, Passim; Bratton, M. 1980, passim). While it is difficult to analyse migration precisely, because, for example, of difficulties in distinguishing long-term from short-term absences, and therefore how to define people in terms of domestic units, the economic life of Mabumba has been and continues to be influenced by connection with the urban centres. Nearly all the old men in the villages (aged over sixty) had spent considerable periods away, working in the mines, domestic service, businesses of one sort or another (shops, hotels, bars etc.), the

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<sup>6</sup> The chief and his retainers (*kapaso* sing.) receive a small government stipend also for running the traditional court.

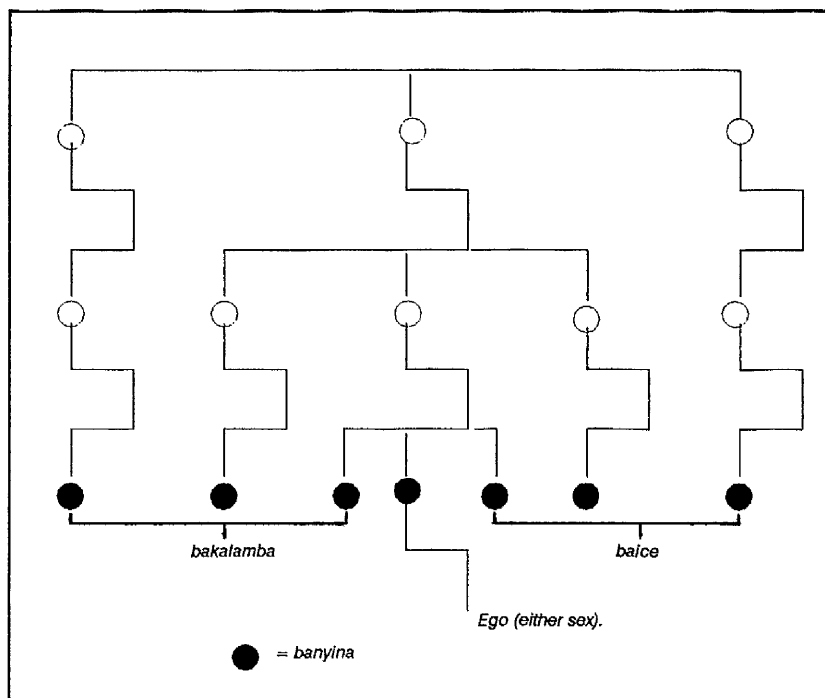
<sup>7</sup> Though it is unusual for men to cook in their own households, it is a perfectly acceptable activity as waged employment; indeed there is a longstanding tradition of men working as cooks in domestic service, beginning under the colonial government, and continued by middle class and elite Zambians.

police or office jobs (usually in some menial capacity). Their opinion, and one supported by younger men in the village, was that during the 1980s the rate of new migrations had decreased considerably, with a sharp decline in employment opportunities in the towns. Nevertheless, if looked at from a household perspective (a household head plus dependants), a significant proportion of the community in 1988 had relatives away in towns with whom they maintained social and economic ties. In ten sample households in an ARPT nutrition survey (1987), of a total population of ninety-four, twenty-eight per cent were away, fifty-eight percent of them men. This study unfortunately did not include reasons for absence. In my own initial household survey in Mabumba, fourteen out of forty-four households (one third) had at least one household member absent. In most of these fourteen cases the household head was in his or her fifties, and the absent relations were their sons (in their thirties) who were away for waged employment and had been absent from the village for several years (in some cases they were the children of men who themselves had worked in town before retiring to the village, and who had merely stayed on where they had grown up). The number of female absentees was rather smaller in my sample (35% of all absentees), and usually their reason for being away was marriage, rather than work, though a couple were nurses in Mansa. A small proportion of both male and female absentees were attending secondary school, though most of these, I was told, would be returning to the village rather than looking for work in town.

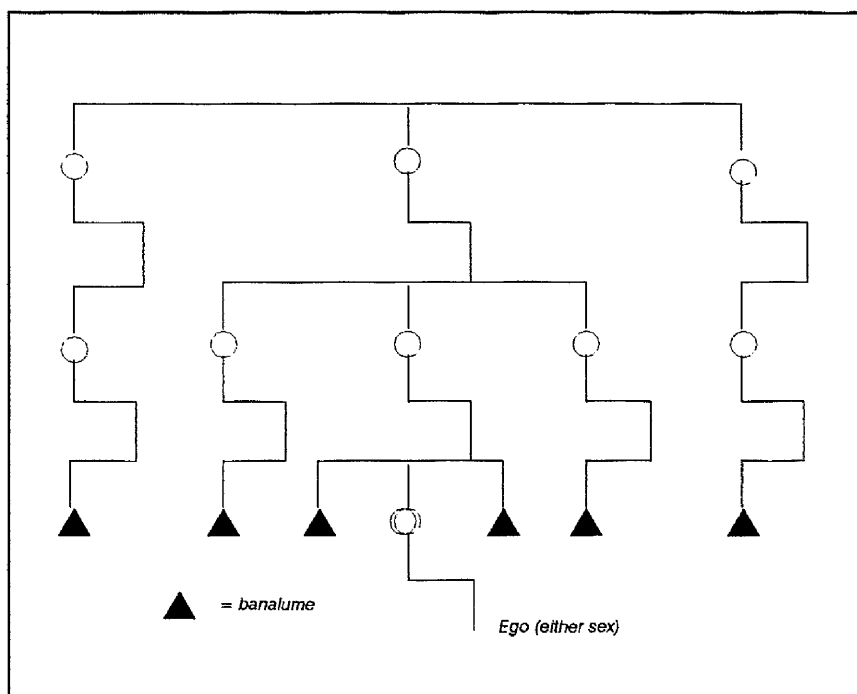
Though I have not focused on labour migration in this thesis, the importance of connection with urban centres through kin will be apparent in chapters 3 to 5.

## Appendix 2: Kinship.

### A. Core terms: first ascending generation matrikin.

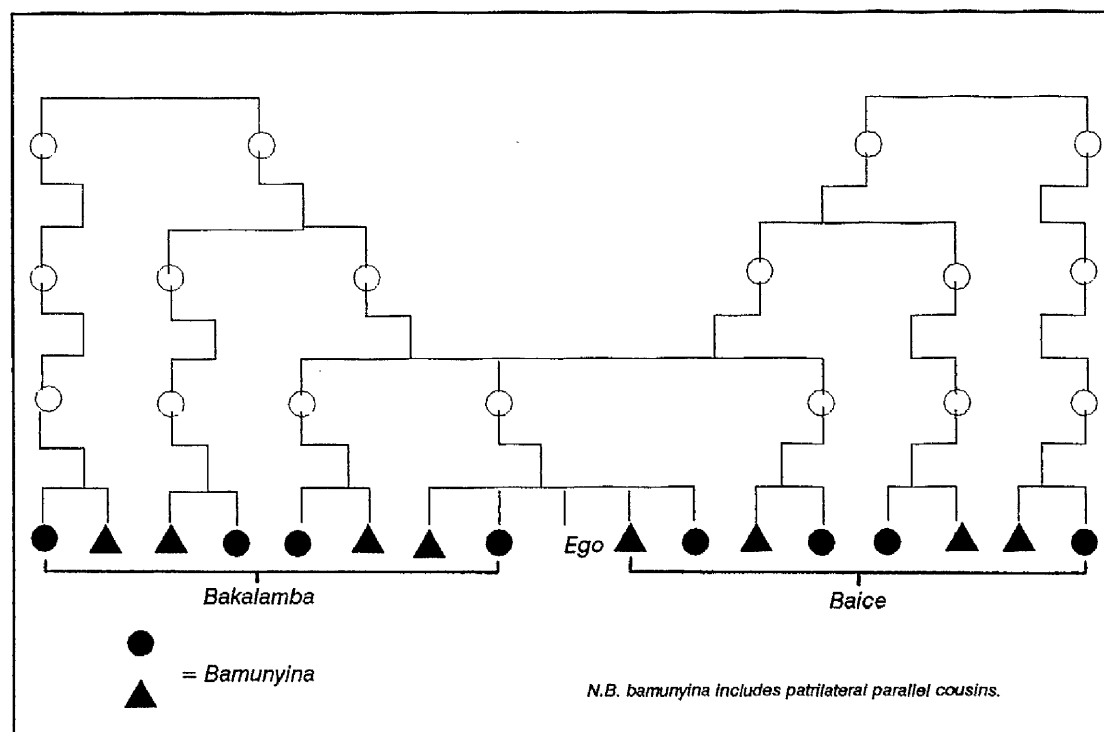


1. *Banyina*



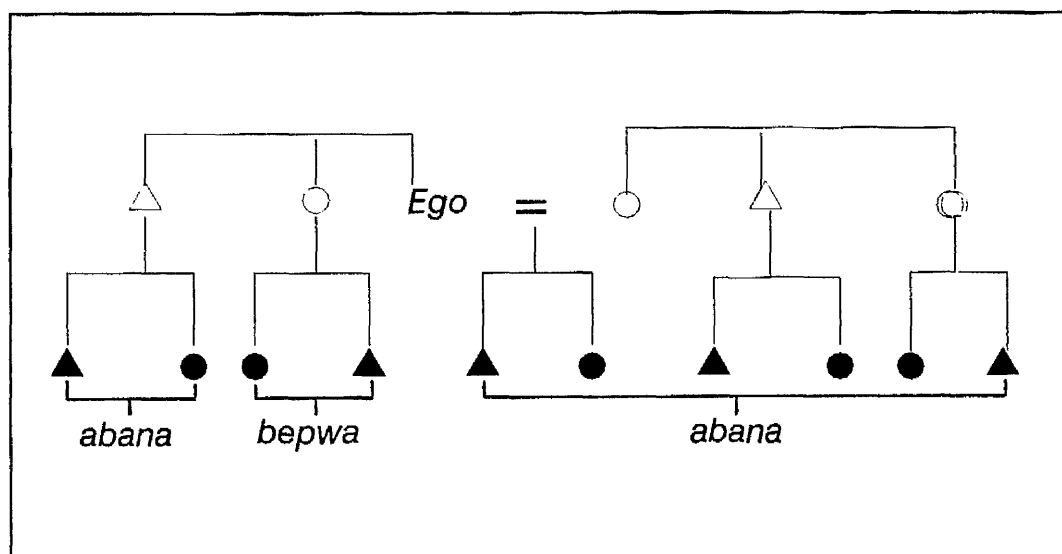
2. *Banalume*

B. Core terms: same generation matrikin.  
(bamunyina).

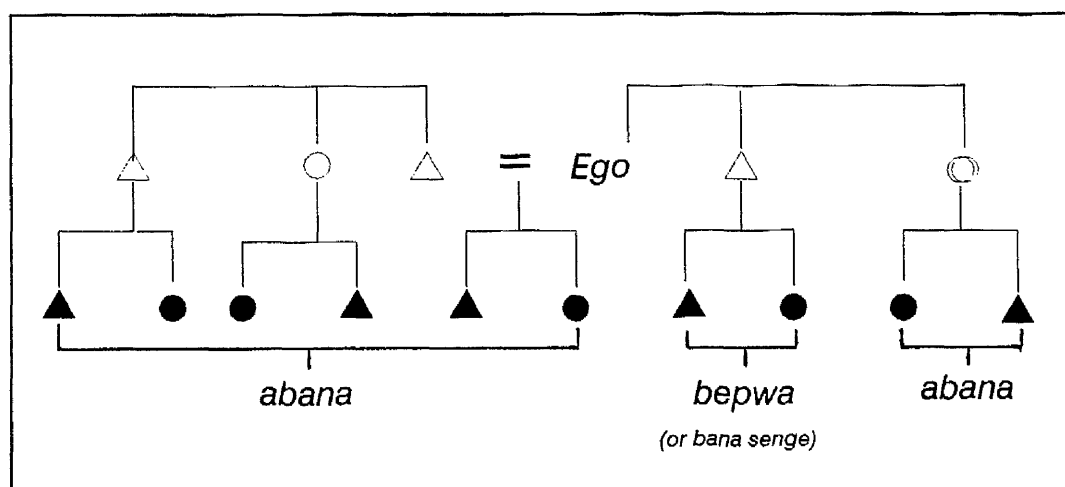




C. Core terms: first descending generation matrikin.



1. Male ego.

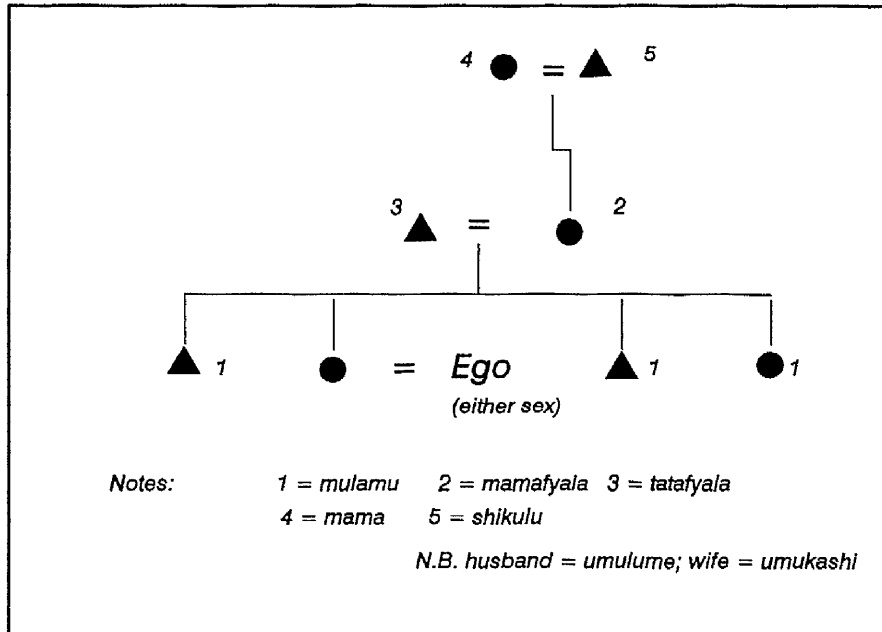


2. Female ego.

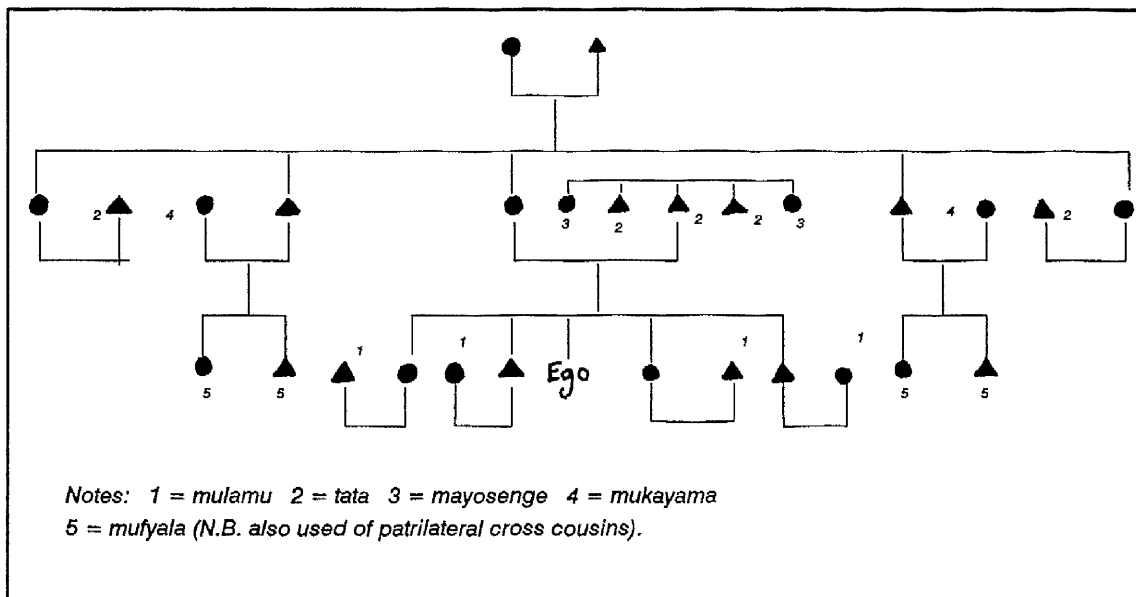
N.B. closest degrees of relation only shown.

For example, for a male ego bepwa are all the children of his female bamunyina.

D. Core terms: affines.

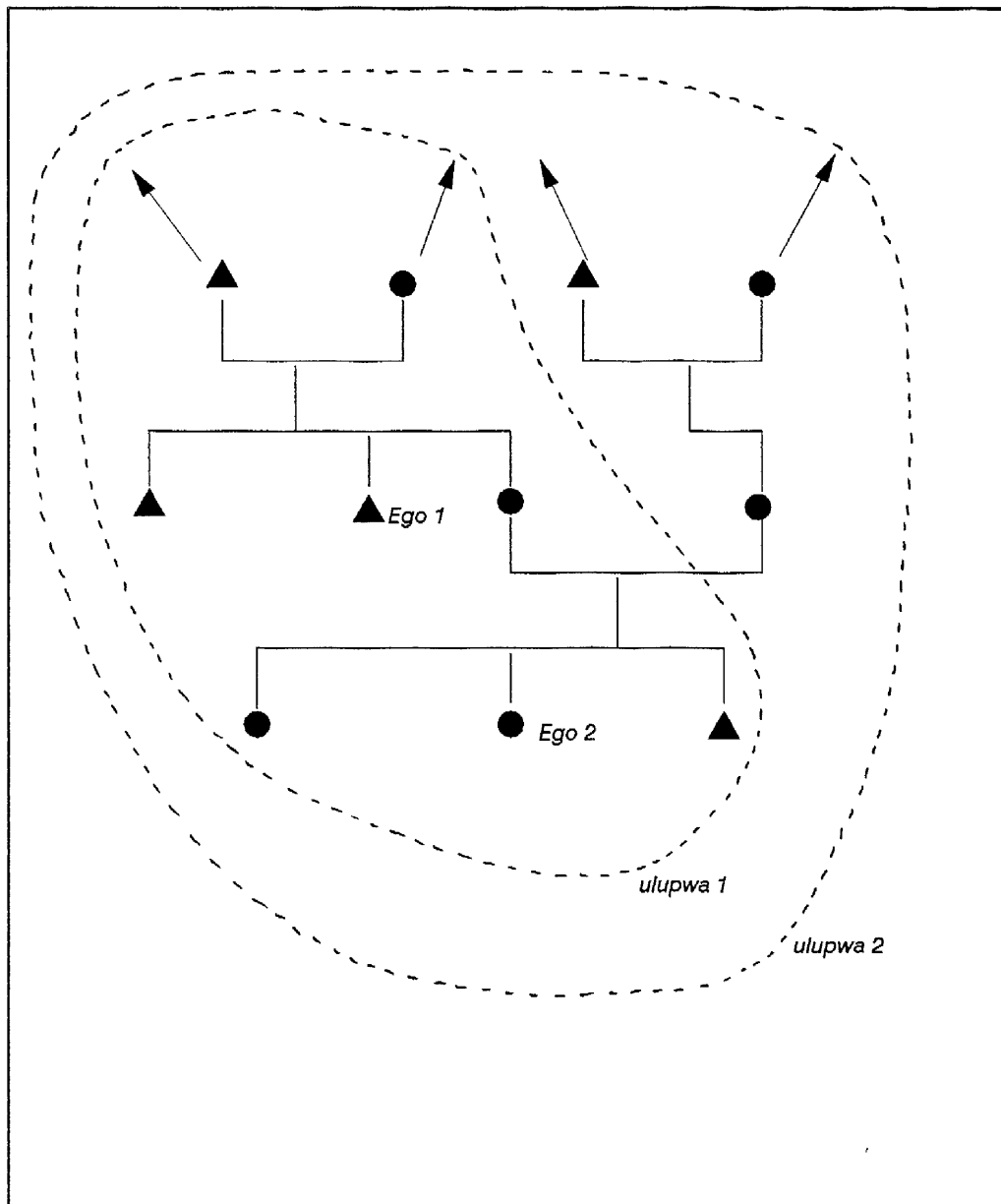


1. Affines who are matrikin of ego's spouse.

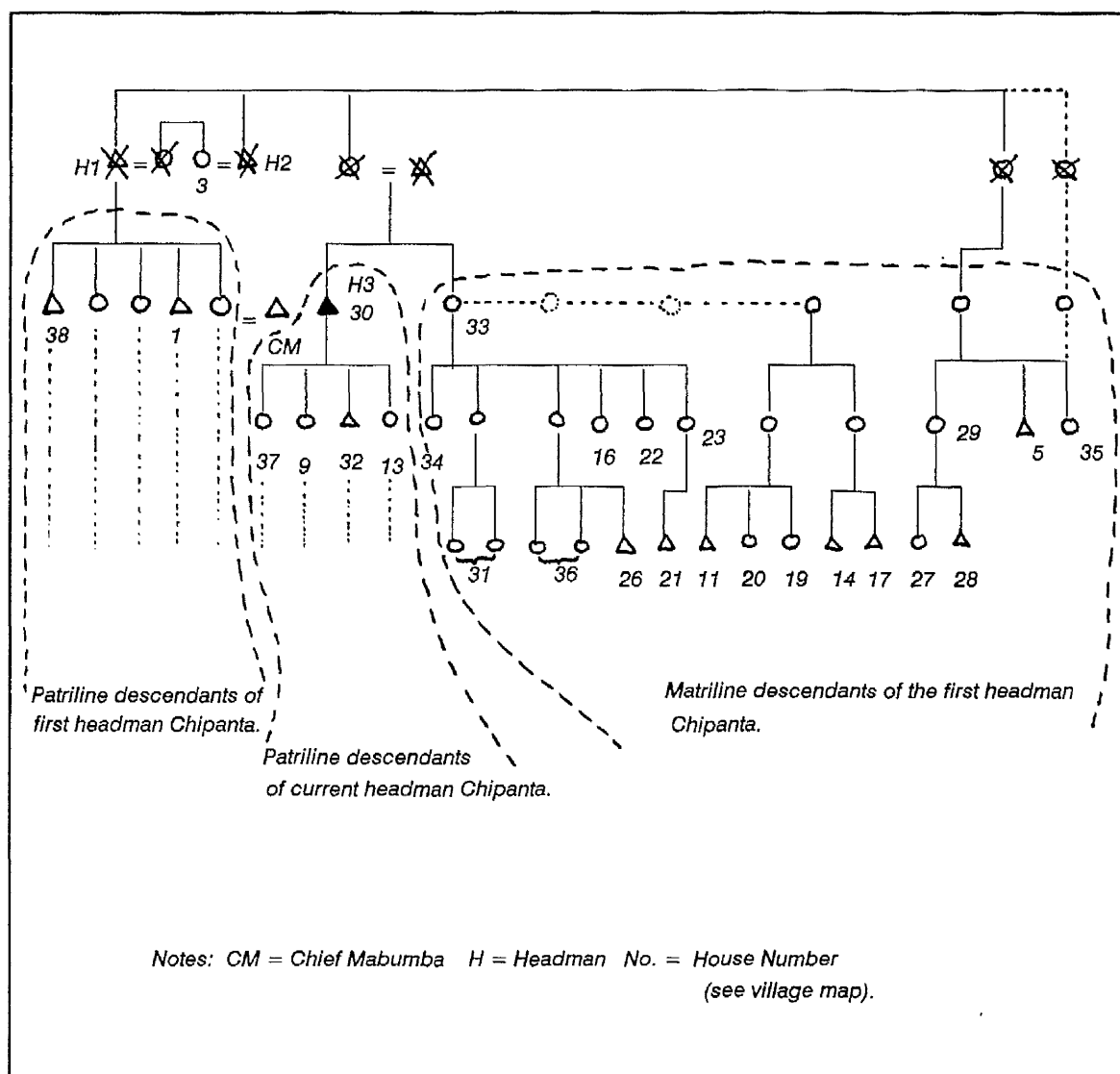


2. Affines who are individuals married to ego's matrikin  
(and their offspring).

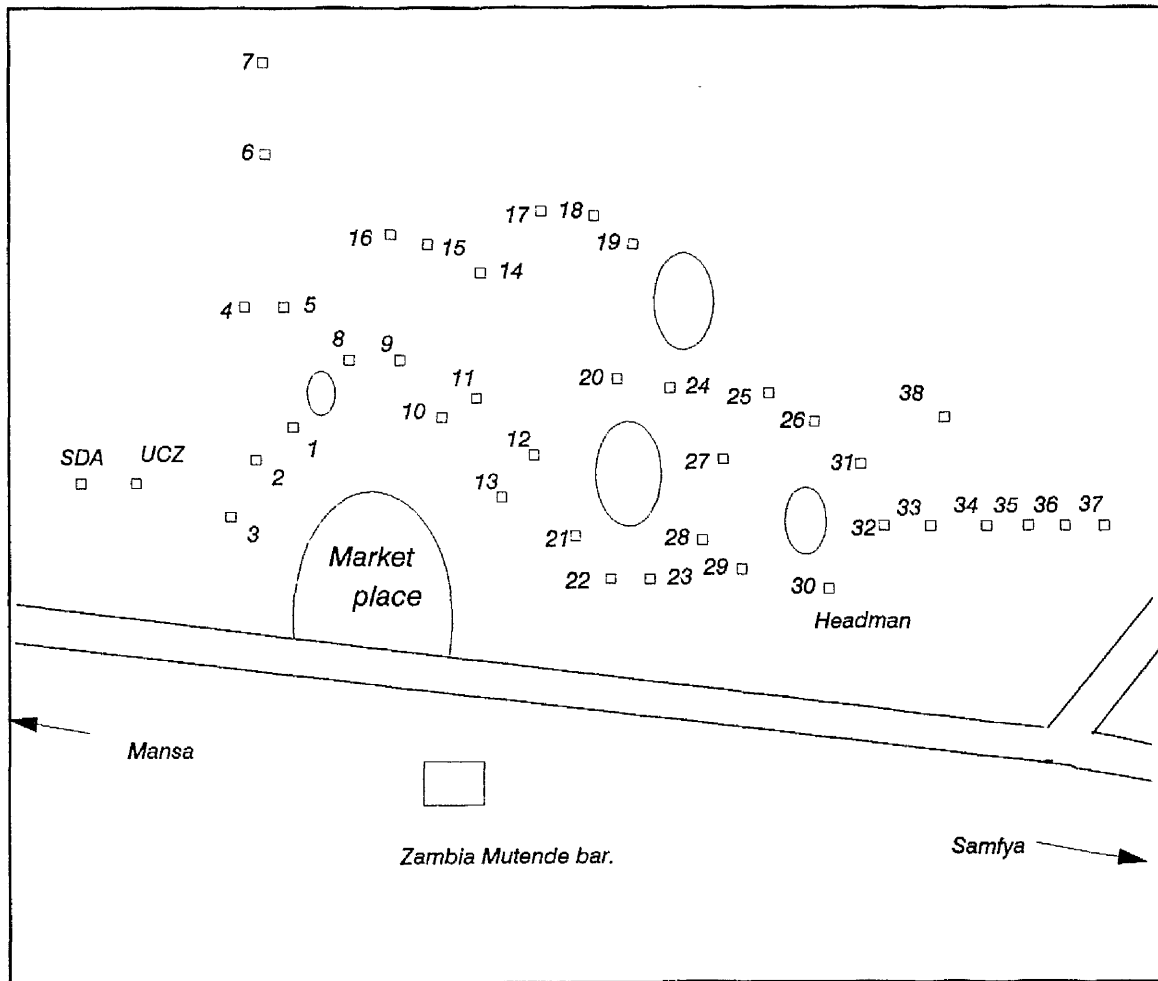
E. The ulupwa: generational shift of inclusiveness.



# F. Core kin groupings in Chipanta.



# G. Sketch Map of Chipanta.



## KEY.

SDA = Seventh Day Adventist church.

UCZ = United Church of Zambia.

□ = House.

○ = Termite mound.

## Appendix 2. H: Relatedness in Chipanta.

Kin terms indicate relatedness to Langson Chipanta (himself resident in Mabumba).

| <u>House.</u> | <u>Senior male.</u>              | <u>Senior female.</u>         |
|---------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1.            | Ethnographer.                    | N/A.                          |
| 2.            | Mwipwa.                          | Bena shikulu babo.            |
| 3.            | N/A.                             | Mayo.                         |
| 4.            | No relation.                     | No relation.                  |
| 5.            | No relation.                     | No relation.                  |
| 6.            | No relation.                     | No relation.                  |
| 7.            | No relation ( <b>Musonda</b> ).  | No relation.                  |
| 8.            | Wesu.                            | Mufyala.                      |
| 9.            | No relation.                     | Mwishikulu wa batata.         |
| 10.           | No relation.                     | Mwana.                        |
| 11.           | Mwina tata.                      | Mufyala.                      |
| 12.           | Mwina tata.                      | No relation.                  |
| 13.           | No relation.                     | No relation.                  |
| 14.           | Mwina tata.                      | Bena shikulu.                 |
| 15.           | No relation ( <b>Dason</b> ).    | No relation.                  |
| 16.           | N/A.                             | Nkashi wa batata.             |
| 17.           | Mwina tata ( <b>Andrea</b> ).    | No relation.                  |
| 18.           | No relation ( <b>John</b> ).     | No relation ( <b>Soma</b> ).  |
| 19.           | No relation ( <b>Eliam</b> ).    | Mwina tata ( <b>Brenda</b> ). |
| 20.           | No relation ( <b>Abel</b> ).     | Mwina tata.                   |
| 21.           | Mwina tata.                      | Mwishikulu.                   |
| 22.           | N/A.                             | Mayosenge.                    |
| 23.           | N/A.                             | Mayosenge.                    |
| 24.           | Mwina tata.                      | No relation.                  |
| 25.           | No relation.                     | Nkashi.                       |
| 26.           | Mwishikulu.                      | No relation.                  |
| 27.           | No relation.                     | Mama ( <b>Paulina</b> ).      |
| 28.           | Mwishikulu ( <b>Raban</b> ).     | N/A.                          |
| 29.           | N/A.                             | Mama ( <b>Betty Musenga</b> ) |
| 30.           | Tata.                            | Mayo (by affiliation).        |
| 31.           | N/A.                             | No relation ( <b>Sarah</b> ). |
| 32.           | Munyina.                         | No relation.                  |
| 33.           | N/A.                             | Mayosenge.                    |
| 34.           | N/A.                             | Mufyala.                      |
| 35.           | N/A.                             | Mwishikulu wa batata.         |
| 36.           | Mwina tata.                      | Mwishikulu wa batata.         |
| 37.           | N/A.                             | Mwana ( <b>Feline</b> ).      |
| 38.           | Mukalamba ( <b>Sebastiano</b> ). | N/A.                          |

### Key to terms not used elsewhere.

Bena shikulu - matrikin relative of maternal (and possibly paternal) grandfather.

Mwishikulu wa batata - "grandchild" in father's matrilineage.  
Nkashi wa batata - Mayosenge (FS).  
Mwina/bena tata - father's matrikin.

Appendix 2I: Ushi clan names.

|                      |                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| <u>Bena ngulube.</u> | wild pig (chiefly clan).  |
| " <u>ngo.</u>        | leopard.                  |
| " <u>bwali.</u>      | porridge.                 |
| " <u>mbulu.</u>      | metal.                    |
| " <u>kani.</u>       | grass.                    |
| " <u>mfula.</u>      | rain.                     |
| " <u>muti.</u>       | tree/medicine.            |
| " <u>nsoka.</u>      | snake.                    |
| " <u>mumba.</u>      | clay.                     |
| " <u>kunda.</u>      | frog.                     |
| " <u>nganga.</u>     | chicken.                  |
| " <u>bowa.</u>       | mushroom.                 |
| " <u>mpande.</u>     | shell bracelet.           |
| " <u>mwansa.</u>     | mushroom (kind).          |
| " <u>mbeba.</u>      | rat.                      |
| " <u>nsange.</u>     | blue monkey.              |
| " <u>chulu.</u>      | ant hill (termite mound). |
| " <u>nguni.</u>      | bird.                     |
| " <u>nsofu.</u>      | elephant.                 |
| " <u>nkalamo.</u>    | lion.                     |
| " <u>mpende.</u>     | fish (kind).              |
| " <u>nshee.</u>      | grasshopper.              |
| " <u>mbushi.</u>     | goat.                     |
| " <u>luwo.</u>       | tree frog.                |
| " <u>ngwena.</u>     | crocodile.                |
| " <u>kashimu.</u>    | bee.                      |
| " <u>kashya.</u>     | antelope (kind).          |
| " <u>mbawo.</u>      | otter.                    |

N.B. This list is probably not exhaustive, but represents the knowledge of one senior informant.



### Appendix 3.

#### A. Farmer category definitions (MAWD).

| <u>Category.</u>                  | <u>Characteristics.</u>                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Subsistence/traditional.          | Little or no involvement in the formal sector.                                                        |
| Peasant (small-scale commercial). | 0-9 hectares of cash crops.                                                                           |
| Emergent.                         | 10-19 hectares of cash crops.                                                                         |
| Commercial.                       | 20+ hectares of cash crops.                                                                           |
| Institutional.                    | State farmers and those running cooperative society farms and plantations (tea, coffee, sugar, etc.). |

#### B. Crop production and sales figures for Mansa East block.

##### 1. Maize.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>No. of farmers</u> | <u>hectarage</u> | <u>estimated sales</u><br>(Kwacha) | <u>actual sales</u><br>(Kwacha) |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 81/82       | 288                   | 412.65           | 12,429                             | 9,402                           |
| 82/83       | 378                   | 485.90           | 13,278                             | 10,688                          |
| 83/84       | 462                   | 727.45           | 21,210                             | 16,485                          |
| 84/85       | N/A                   | N/A              | N/A                                | N/A                             |
| 85/86       | 551                   | 884.00           | 30,141                             | 25,421                          |
| 86/87       | 2028                  | 1,335.00         | 28,195                             | 33,178                          |

##### 2. Groundnuts.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>No. of farmers</u> | <u>hectarage</u> | <u>estimated yield</u><br>(tonnes) | <u>sales</u><br>(Kwacha) |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 81/82       | 104                   | 62.00            | 571                                | N/A                      |
| 82/83       | 59                    | 90.25            | 795                                | N/A                      |
| 83/84       | 135                   | 127.80           | 432                                | N/A                      |
| 84/85       | N/A                   | N/A              | N/A                                | N/A                      |
| 85/86       | 1,700                 | 4,250.00         | 8,500                              | N/A                      |
| 86/87       | 6,500                 | 1,625.00         | 26,000                             | N/A                      |

### 3. Beans.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>No. of farmers</u> | <u>hectarage</u> | <u>estimated yield</u><br>(tonnes) | <u>sales</u><br>(Kwacha) |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 81/82       | 25                    | 19               | 251                                | N/A                      |
| 82/83       | 34                    | 31               | 213                                | N/A                      |
| 83/84       | 32                    | 38               | 360                                | N/A                      |
| 84/85       | N/A                   | N/A              | N/A                                | N/A                      |
| 85/86       | 295                   | 62.5             | 93                                 | N/A                      |
| 86/87       | 2,600                 | 520              | 4,160                              | N/A                      |

### 4. Cassava.

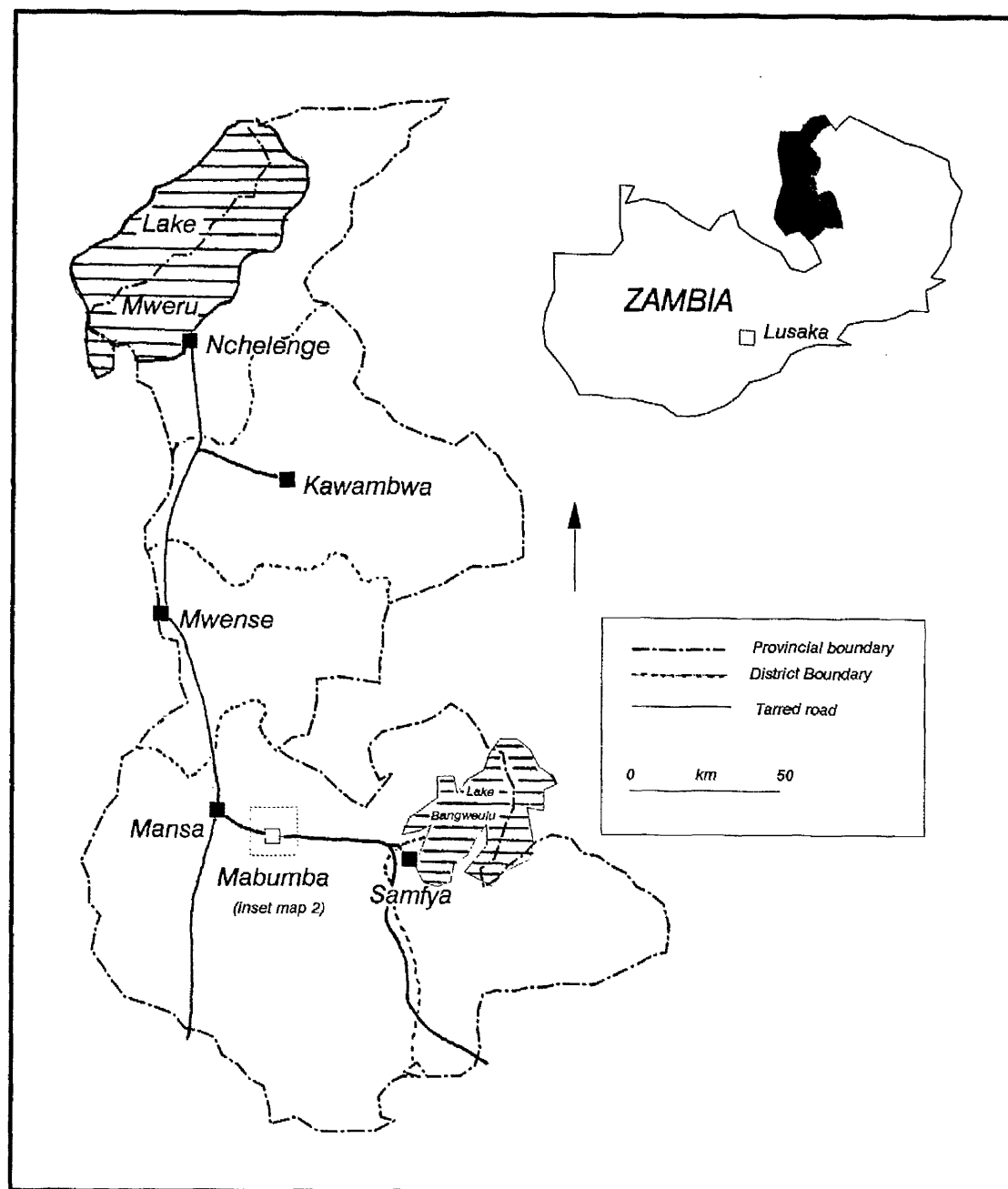
| <u>Year</u> | <u>No. of farmers</u> | <u>hectarage</u> | <u>estimated yield</u><br>(tonnes) | <u>sales</u><br>(Kwacha) |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 85/86       | 17,250                | 28,875           | 631,000                            | N/A                      |
| 86-87       | 8,500                 | 4,000            | 112,000                            | N/A                      |

### 5. Finger millet.

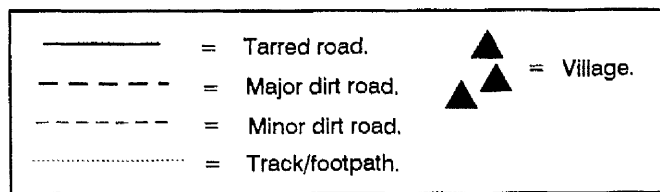
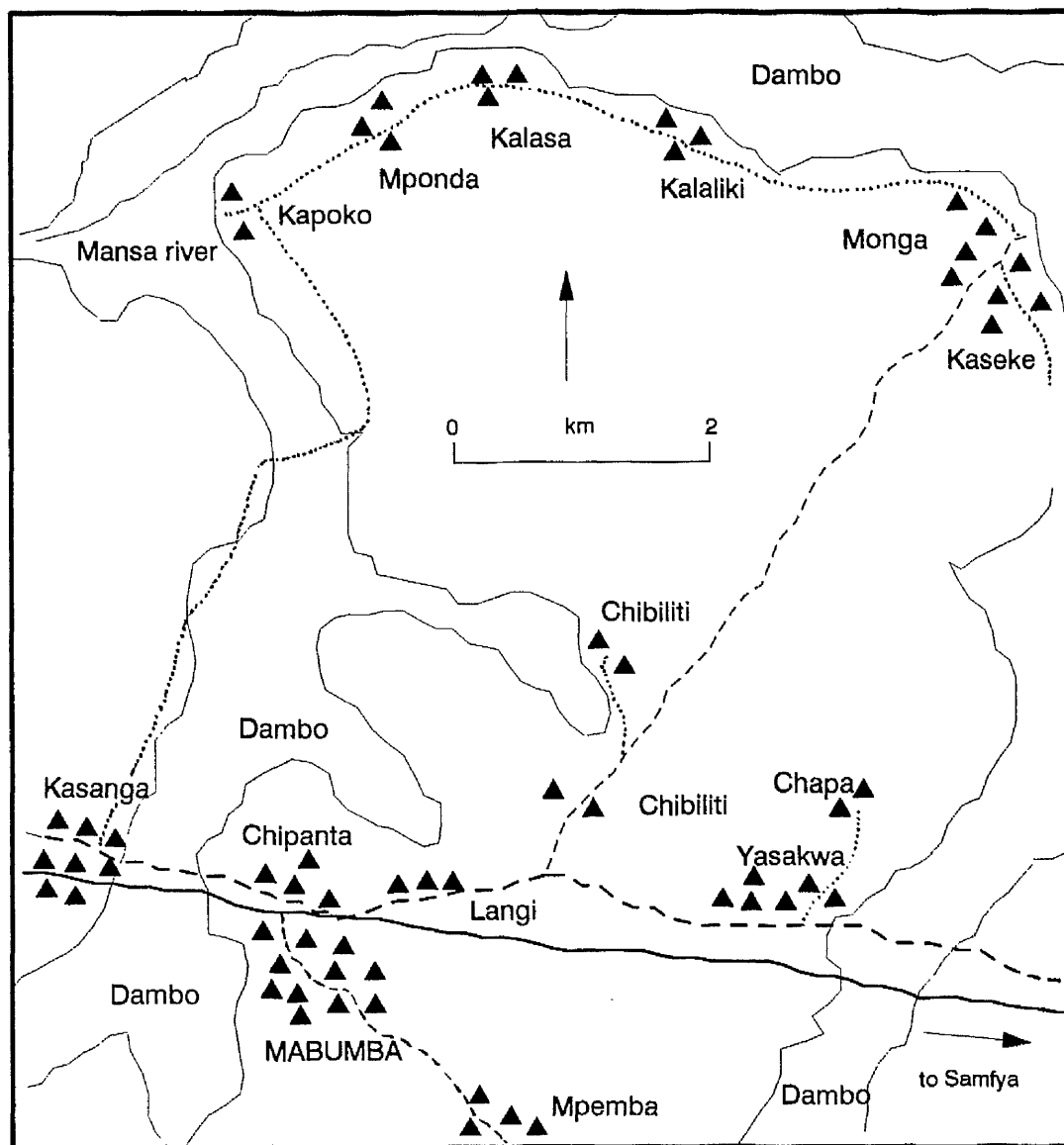
No production statistics available.

## Appendix 4.

Map 1: Zambia and Luapula Province.



Map 2: Mabumba agricultural camp.



## Glossary

This general glossary of indigenous terms lists words in the form they first appear in the text. Nouns are singular unless otherwise indicated. Refer to chapter 3 for kin terms as these do not easily translate concisely.

|                   |                                  |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| banakungula (pl.) | traders (middlemen)              |
| batunga (pl.)     | a kind of bush rat               |
| butuluka          | grey (as of soil)                |
| buyantanshi       | "development"; the future        |
| cifutwe           | locally produced salt            |
| cikandashi        | clayey soil                      |
| cikolwe           | village founder and/or           |
|                   | lineage head                     |
| cikota            | lineage                          |
| Gilaluka          | Makumba's seer                   |
| cimisha           | sourness                         |
| cipande           | territorial division             |
| cipataulwa        | " "                              |
| cipyra            | forest with scattered trees and  |
|                   | tall grass (and its character-   |
|                   | istic soil)                      |
| cisebe            | field type cultivated directly   |
|                   | from the bush                    |
| cishibilo         | crop theft by supernatural means |
| cisoni            | shame; shameful                  |
| citemene          | shifting cultivation             |
| citente           | territorial or village division  |
| fincupa           | skin disease of cattle           |
| fita              | black (as of soil)               |
| ibabula (pl.)     | charcoal brazier                 |
| ibala             | semi-permanent field type        |
| ibumba            | clay                             |
| icalo             | territory under traditional      |
|                   | guardianship                     |
| ifibimbi (pl.)    | cucumbers                        |
| ifishimu (pl.)    | caterpillars                     |
| ifyumbu (pl.)     | sweet potatoes                   |
| ilandu (pl.)      | cowpeas                          |
| ilungu            | dambo (grassy shallow valley)    |
| imbalala (pl.)    | groundnuts (peanuts)             |
| imitonga (pl.)    | baskets                          |
| imilumbe (pl.)    | kind of traditional narrative    |
| imiono (pl.)      | fish traps                       |
| imiunda (pl.)     | first year citemene gardens      |
| impuku (pl.)      | kind of bush rat                 |
| imputa (pl.)      | field ridges                     |
| impwa (pl.)       | local aubergine                  |
| inganda           | house                            |
| inkoko            | chicken                          |
| insakwi (pl.)     | incipient bush settlements       |
| insupa (pl.)      | gourd calabashes                 |
| ipinda            | kind of traditional narrative    |

|                      |                                                                    |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| isembe               | axe                                                                |
| kalundwe             | cassava (CiBemba)                                                  |
| kapaso               | chief's retainer                                                   |
| kapempe              | tree ( <u>Hymenocardia acida</u> )                                 |
| katata               | millet beer served individually                                    |
| katubi               | millet beer shared from calabash                                   |
| kolela               | cassava mealy bug                                                  |
| kubola               | to rot                                                             |
| kulomba              | to beg                                                             |
| kulima               | to cultivate                                                       |
| kupyana              | to succeed to position of a dead kinsman (esp. sororate marriage). |
| kutema               | to cut (e.g. branches, hence <u>citemene</u> )                     |
| kutipa               | to dig                                                             |
| Lesa                 | God                                                                |
| lusula               | elephantiasis of the scrotum                                       |
| lutambi              | custom; tradition                                                  |
| mafarms/mafamu (pl.) | maize farms                                                        |
| male (pl.)           | finger millet                                                      |
| marotation (pl.)     | arable rotation                                                    |
| masaka (pl.)         | sorghum                                                            |
| mataba (pl.)         | maize                                                              |
| matanda (pl.)        | mats                                                               |
| menshi               | water; semen                                                       |
| mfumbafumba          | maize stalk borer                                                  |
| mito (pl.)           | ashes                                                              |
| mpanga               | bush/forest                                                        |
| mpundu               | tree ( <u>Parinari curatellifolia</u> )                            |
| mubanga              | " ( <u>Pericopsis angolensis</u> )                                 |
| mucanga              | sand (as of soil)                                                  |
| muchinshi            | manners; respect; comportment                                      |
| mufundo              | fertiliser; soil organic matter                                    |
| mukowa               | matrilineal clan                                                   |
| mulanda              | poor person                                                        |
| mulandu              | affair or court case                                               |
| mulopa               | blood                                                              |
| munganunshi          | tree ( <u>Acacia polyacantha</u> ssp. <u>campylacantha</u> )       |
| munkoyo              | sweet maize beer                                                   |
| mupapa               | tree ( <u>Afzelia quanzensis</u> )                                 |
| mupina               | poor person                                                        |
| muputu               | tree ( <u>Brachystegia spiciformis</u> )                           |
| musuku               | tree ( <u>Uapaca kirkiana</u> )                                    |
| mutala               | territorial section                                                |
| muti                 | tree/medicine (generic)                                            |
| mutondo              | tree ( <u>Julbernardia paniculata</u> )                            |
| mwine                | owner                                                              |
| nkundwe              | red soil                                                           |
| nsaka                | eating/drinking shelter outside the house                          |
| senkobo              | see <u>fincupa</u>                                                 |
| tute                 | cassava (Caushi)                                                   |
| ubowa                | mushroom                                                           |
| ubusonge             | small marriage payment                                             |
| ubutala              | granary                                                            |

ubwali

thick porridge of cassava, maize  
or millet eaten as staple.

ulukasu

hoe

umunani

meat, fish or vegetable relish  
eaten with ubwali

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